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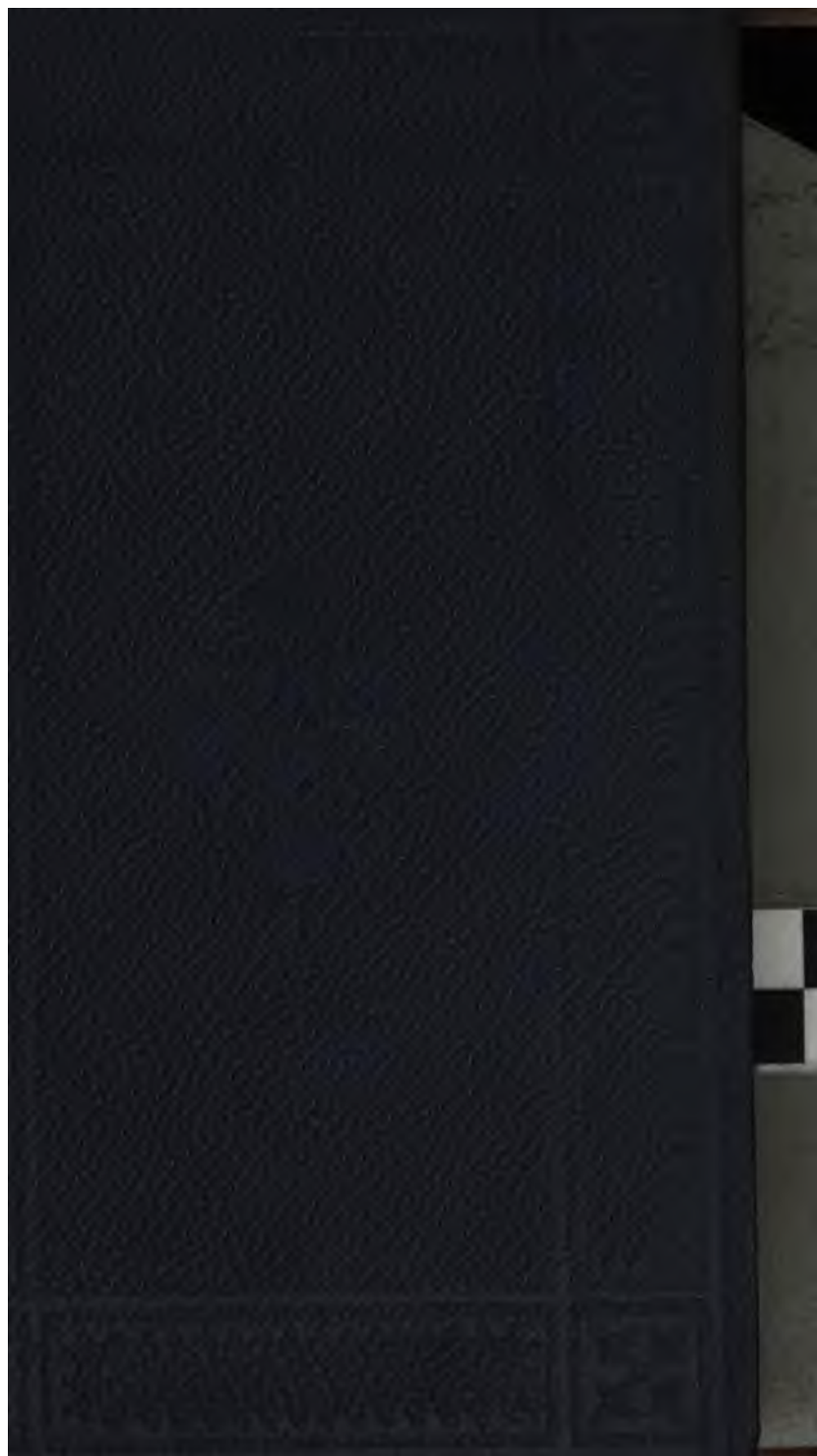
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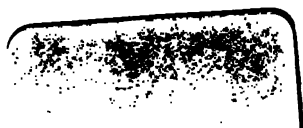
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HEARTHS & WATCH-FIRES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY CAPTAIN COLOMB, R.A.,

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HEARTHS & WATCH-FIRES.

CHAPTER I.

Cælum, non animum, mutant, qui trans mare currunt.

HORACE.

THE island of Malta, with its numberless stone walls (built to keep the patches of soil transported thither with much trouble and at a great expense, from washing into the sea) was hailed with joy by all on board the transport, which had hitherto made a voyage of remarkable brevity. It was evening when the pilot,

coming on board, conducted the transport safely into the spacious harbour of Valetta. Those who had not before visited the locality were struck with the imposing appearance of the remarkable city, raised by the indomitable Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

Tier upon tier of batteries upon all sides shewed bristling rows of guns peeping from embrasures, and threatening a concentrated fire upon intruders daring enough to enter the harbour with hostile intentions. To the right the principal part of the town was to be seen, terrace rising above terrace, and domes and cupolas here and there towering above humbler edifices. All loomed rather darkly against the sky, where the sun had just disappeared, but a flood of golden light poured through a row of arches, at one of the highest points; in appearance not dissimilar to a Roman aqueduct. The wind had suddenly subsided; the air was sultry, and the reflections of buildings, rocks and shipping, in the almost still water, were only agitated by numberless little boats

of peculiar structure, which were to be seen moving about in all directions.

Immediately in front, an exceedingly lofty pile, called Fort St. Angelo, reared itself on a long promontory, jutting from the left hand side of the harbour, which is divided into several bays or creeks. Suddenly, from the upper part of the fort, there came a red flash, followed by a loud report, which was tossed back and forward against rocks and buildings, till the roaring sound at last died away, and a wreath of white smoke slowly ascended into the sky.—It was the evening gun. Just before this, a boat with a yellow flag had approached the transport, whose skipper presently informed the officers that he had got “*produc*” (*pratique*), and St. Vincent having obtained permission to go on shore, was presently ferried (in company with some others) towards a landing place called “*Nix Mangiare*,” and during the passage had time to admire the peculiar scenery around, and the picturesque air of the little creaking bark and its gon-

dolier, who in a standing position, with one leg in advance, threw the forward weight of his body into the oar.

A conversation with the Palinurus drew forth some curious facts. First, that it was "plenty too hot" in Malta at present; and next, that Sebastopol was taken and the Russians killed to a man! The language of the boatman, however, was so vague that the latter statement was not believed. The smell of hot rock combined with still less agreeable odours, greeted the noses of the Englishmen as they set foot upon *terra firma*, midst crowds of muleteers, squabbling and chattering to their comrades in boats, who on their part wrangled with each other. Boisterous soldiers shouting "Dy-so-o-o-o?"* and people embarking and disembarking from different parts of the harbour. Up a narrow flight of steps and across a drawbridge went our party, after which they commenced their ascent of those "streets of stairs" which with "the po-

* The word by which a boat is hailed.

pulation ever railing" came under the censure of Lord Byron.

The "little military hot-house" was at this time filled with the soldiers of more than one nation, and the medley of tongues was rather bewildering to ears, as was the diversity of costume, to eyes accustomed only to the Frankish, which, by the way, will one day succeed in chasing from the face of this earth more picturesque nationalities. The Strada Reale, with its lazy-moving crowds and singular architecture, was soon entered. Lights were beginning to brighten the shop windows and streets, occasionally sparkling from the numerous bay windows above; but though night was approaching, the air—deeply impregnated with the fumes of tobacco and the odour of garlic—was close and suffocating from the intense heat exhaled from the arid rock, which had all day blazed under a fierce sun.

While wandering in the Piazza, which fronts the palace of the governor, our hero met a friend of his of the —th. "Hallo!

St. Vincent," he exclaimed, "where on earth have you come from? I didn't know you were here."

St. Vincent explained the cause of his appearance, an invitation to dinner followed, and St. Vincent, conducted by his friend, proceeded at once to the locality named, which, separated by a dusty waste, forms a sort of suburb to Valetta.

Upon the way our hero was very inquisitive to know what had become of the British expedition to the east, for he had heard so many different accounts since landing, that he did not know which to believe. It was not till next morning, however, that authentic news of the glorious victory of the Alma was fully confirmed.

We shall abstain from describing the bill of fare at the mess of the —th, or the programme of the airs performed by the band round a fountain in the interior of what had once been a palace, but was now a barrack. We shall content ourselves with stating

that St. Vincent's hospitable entertainer had also invited his Italian master, who, without intending it, excited some merriment by relating how a "frien of hees had in hee's possession one larch red cat, which, de oder day, did make five, six littel poppiesh!"

After dinner, St. Vincent was introduced to one of the guests, a naval officer, who kindly invited him to a dance that evening, on board the Sultana, which, as the officer expressed it, "he had the honor to command." Our hero accepted the invitation, and accompanied a select party on board. A somewhat indifferent band was tuning up as he stepped upon the deck of the steamer (for such the Sultana was) where an awning, eked out by sundry union-jacks, ensigns, and heterogeneous signal flags, made a sort of temporary ball-room, further decorated with colored lamps. Young ladies, who were, some of them, rather good-looking, but had not that freshness of complexion which belongs to more northern climates, accompanied by their chaperones, began

to arrive. Some of them were English, others, slight in form, with brilliant dark eyes, evidently belonged to an indigenous race, whose picturesque attire, the *faldetta*, had previously come under the observation of our friend Arthur, though we have omitted to mention the fact. Their foreign accent would have betrayed their caste, if nothing else did.

Headed by the entertainer—a jovial, hearty sailor—various couples began to revolve on the deck of the steamer, which was as scrupulously clean as the deck of a man-of-war usually is; but it required a sharp eye and steady steering to turn neatly around the binnacle, and avoid tumbling down the steps into the cabin of the commander on the other side. It was unfortunately blowing a sirocco, and it was evident that some effort was requisite to acquire and sustain that elasticity, which is so indispensable an element of the dance.

St. Vincent, as he drew a comparison between the present entertainment, and the ball

at Amalfi, felt anything but gay, and it was with very chequered sensations that he listened to "The Dream of the Ocean" waltz. And here we cannot refrain from alluding to the strange empire which music asserts over reason and memory in calling up with such vivid reality the color of former ideas. How often a tune has been found interwoven with thought, looks, words, and circumstances, in such a manner, that time appears to have made a backward stride, and brought us amongst scenes perhaps for ever changed—we leave the happy possessors of a musical ear to determine; while, with regard to St. Vincent, we are unable to state whether pain or pleasure was predominant in the thoughts which the simple melody called up, but which, so long as the same music was continued, he could neither divert nor control. The sentimental reader, will, however, scarcely be surprised to learn that when the waltz was concluded, it left our hero in, what is commonly called, "a brown study." His eye fell vacantly upon the

figure of a person who probably belonged to the class of "long haired patriots" (we suppress a qualifying adjective). A rather forbidding countenance, very black eyes—moustache, and tuft on the chin of the same color—unaccompanied by whisker (or, we might add, clean shaving), were not out of character with a general "shabby genteel" appearance.

All this St. Vincent had unconsciously noted, and was thinking that the man's hair as well as his patched boots wanted brushing, while such words as "Si, si, da Napoli—vapore—anch' Io—sempre lo stessog—uerra," &c., &c., reached his ear, from the rapid dialogue which the "Patriot" carried on with a Maltese. The sound at least, but not the sense was caught, for we do not believe that our hero was endeavouring to make out what the man said. His thoughts were elsewhere, and his eyes wandered from the shabby genteel gentleman to a lady by his side, dressed in white silk. Now if the reader can recall to memory what Miss De Clare wore upon the memorable night


at Amalfi, he may perhaps guess why St. Vincent, looking abstractedly at the face of this person, who had blue eyes, and hair of a pale brown color, suddenly became awakened from a reverie, which indeed, though it has occupied some time in describing, was not of many moments' duration.

The fair incognita, whose stature was about the same as Miss De Clare's, had evidently, from the manner in which she returned St. Vincent's gaze, imagined that he appreciated her appearance. This, however, he did not; it was probably more the lady's costume than any fancied resemblance, which had associated her in his thoughts with the fair mistress of his affections. Looking down, he caught sight of a certain peculiar formation of her right hand glove. It was made like a mit, and suggested the idea of a monstrosity which filled him with a sort of horror. He began in fact to think she must be web-fingered, which was really the case. It was nearly at the same moment that some question, put by

the "Patriot," caught his attention ; they were uttered in "the Tuscan siren tongue," with a disagreeable Neapolitan accent ; and St. Vincent was not a little surprised to discover that the shabby-looking stranger, who, it appeared had just come from Naples, was on the look out for the arrival of the Fairy Queen, and was perfectly informed as to the precise date of its departure from England ; he even thought he heard the number of his own regiment named, amongst other things, but of this he was not certain. Presently, however, at the instigation of the female (we doubt whether a higher term could be properly applied to a person, who, though not without certain personal attractions, had not altogether the air of a lady), the Patriot induced his friend the Maltese gentleman to take them up for presentation to their host, who accorded a reception such as is generally offered to guests who have been brought to a party uninvited.

Wonders, like misfortunes, are sometimes

gregarious. St. Vincent had scarcely had time to indulge in a speculation as to the possible connection between a Neapolitan refugee and an English transport, conveying troops to the seat of war, when he perceived a lady standing before him, uttering his name in a tone of surprise and pleasure. At first he could hardly believe his eyes; but it was no delusion; on the contrary, a very palpable fact. The red hair and pink eyes might have belonged to somebody else, but St. Vincent knew they were part and parcel of Miss Crump, and he shook hands with her very heartily, we fear not entirely for her own sake, but rather because she shone with a reflected light from an enchanted region. The poor heiress (if an heiress can with propriety be termed poor), who spoke very hurriedly, and said many things at random, informed St. Vincent that she and her aunt had come to winter at Malta; that they had left Newington very shortly after his departure, as she and her aunt found it impossible to stay any



longer with the Broadways, who were really hateful people; and indeed she pitied poor Miss Winter, for between the three girls and their mother the governess led the life of a dog.

Miss Crump hoped Mr. St. Vincent was going to stay some time at Malta, which, though she had seen nothing of it, was, she was sure, a very delightful place. Indeed, for her part, she did not see why Mr. St. Vincent should go to the Crimea at all. Many other subjects Miss Crump touched upon, without interesting St. Vincent, for the young lady had not been to Clare Hall before she left Newington, and knew not a word about anything anybody had said concerning the Baronet's family.

Indeed she seemed to be quite in the dark as to what had been going on between Alice and our hero.

Once or twice in the course of the dance (much to St. Vincent's surprise) she called him accidentally by his christian name, and ended

by hoping he would come and see her aunt on the following morning at No. 25, Strada Forni.

The quadrille was just concluded when the Commander of the Sultana—pulling St. Vincent by the sleeve—introduced the lady in white silk as the Contessa di Fageoli, who immediately overwhelmed him with attentions.

Her Italian was so bad that our hero began to suspect her nationality, but upon his saying something in English he was only answered by an impudent stare, though he felt certain that the Contessa must have understood what he said.

He found the noble lady very inquisitive, and observed that the Conte di Fageoli, to whom he was afterwards presented, hovered incessantly at his elbow, as if with the design of overhearing what was said.

The Count and his wife pressed him to come to supper in a certain street which they could not name, but to which they said they would conduct him: and though St. Vincent

repeatedly declined the honour intended, the hospitable pair still persevered.

So closely did they follow up their first attack, that on stepping into a boat to return to the "Fairy Queen," St. Vincent presently found the Count and his lady beside him. Not approving of such behaviour, however, the victim of these very marked attentions sprang into another boat, and thus evaded his pursuers, whom he not unreasonably took for people of doubtful character.

CHAPTER II.

The Isles of Greece! The Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho lov'd and sung;
Where grew the arts of War and Peace—
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung—
Eternal sunshine gilds them yet,
But all except their sun is set.
The tomb, which gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff.

BYRON.

It will readily be imagined that St. Vincent, separated as he was from friends, with whom he had been on terms of such close intimacy for several months, awaited, with no little impatience, the receipt of some intelligence from Clare Hall. On arriving at Malta, he had gone straight to the Strada Mercanti, in search of the post office, which he found closed ;

but on the following morning, his exertions met with better success. He received some letters, and was encouraged to hope, that amongst them, one more interesting than the rest might be found. He took a rapid glance at each in succession. The last he looked at, was in a lady's hand; it was from England, and contained many sheets of foreign paper; but he did not at first recognise the handwriting. He broke the seal, and found a letter from his aunt announcing her husband's death, and her intention of retiring into a convent. It also contained a rather lengthy discourse, in which many arguments were used to induce her nephew to enter the bosom of a "Church, founded by the Apostles, and presided over by the spiritual descendant of St. Peter."

This voluminous epistle, seemed in St. Vincent's eyes, but a poor substitute for the delightful one, which he had flattered himself, he might expect. But being of a sanguine disposition, he soon recovered whatever disappointment he felt, and began to hope that

fate and the post, would be more propitious at Constantinople.

Just after receiving his letters, St. Vincent learnt, without much regret, that the Fairy Queen had got her sailing orders, and was to be off directly. As he descended with all speed the narrow flight of steps to "Nix Mangiare," a little boy thrust a note into his hand, and disappeared.

"How extremely attentive," said he, to a companion, "is this Conte Fageoli, whom I told you, I met last night. It appears that the Contessa and her husband, will be happy to see me at their box in the theatre this evening, to hear a good 'prose' company, from Florence. I strongly suspect, they are a pair of thieves." (Probably the reader will not be disposed to regard the Count and his wife in a more favourable light).

Our hero was destined to lose the society of Prettyman ; the latter did not again embark in the transport. The interest of his friends

had procured for Clementina's lover a cornetcy in the —th Dragoons, which appeared in the *Gazette* a few days after his departure from England, and this intelligence, as well as a new uniform, awaited his arrival at Malta. He was despatched at once by steamer to Balaclava, whither his regiment, part of which we met at Newington, had already proceeded with all expedition.

Our slower transport weighed anchor once more.

The town of Valetta, with its pale forts, batteries, terraces, domes, and houses, grew "small by degrees and beautifully less," as the Fairy Queen ploughed her onward course through the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Etna reared its distant shadowy form, in the far north west. Ere many days, however, St. Vincent and his companions, were doomed to experience a change of weather, for the transport had to struggle with an easterly gale of such fury, that it reminded them of a tempestuous wind called, "EUROCLYDON;" and

threatened a similar fate to that which overtook the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Shipwreck on the Island of Malta was however escaped, the Levanter subsided, but the wind was still unfavourable, and it was with much grumbling that the impatient soldiers daily inspected a zig-zag track on the chart, and learnt that an average of twenty-five or thirty miles per diem was all that could be made. It appears from St. Vincent's journal that Cerigo, Cerigotto and Crete, saw the Fairy Queen still struggling with head winds.

The following novel version of the King of Ithaca is suggestive of the fact. It does not appear whether our hero, or some other poet claims the authorship of a fragment which we here insert.

THE WANDERINGS OF ULYSSES.

*Trinacria fades upon the azure seas—
Six days before the wind the vessel flees ;
The sage Ulysses, when the seventh had run
His brazen sextant seized 'to take the sun ;'
At a small aperture, he placed his eye
Then rears the instrument towards the sky,*

And screws and screws, till on the wat'ry plain
The sun descending seems to kiss the main—
The fav'ring Gods the declination fix,
And mark the latitude at 36.
Down to "the cuddy " then, with thoughtful mien,
With stately step and with a brow serene,
The storm-tossed chief in silence takes his way,
To where his chart upon the table lay—
(Chart made by Strabo, but alas designed
Not to assist but to confuse the mind)
In vain sage Ithacus, with puzzled look,
Pores o'er the map—in vain consults his book,
For Strabo stern, from all compunction free
Says, here the Syrtis Major ought to be.
But now the northern winds the sails expand
And sage Ulysses deems he snuffs the land ;
And soon before him, in thin vapours roll'd,
Fair Cytherea doth her hills unfold,
Far to the right the snow-capp'd mountains rise
And Ida rears her summit to the skies,
And high Melissa and Lycastus hoar,
Mark fertile Crete where dwells the Minotaur.
Unconscious still the navigator sees
The clust'ring Islands of the Cyclades
Still deems delusion spread before his view
And fondly thinks his erring Strabo true.
For thus the Delphian oracle had said
When at the shrine, the monarch bowed his head,
" MY SON, BELIEVE (AND PROSP'ROUS THOU SHALT BE)
NOTHING YOU HEAR, AND ONLY HALF YOU SEE !"
A northward course is now his fate to try,
(So fix the solemn conclave of the sky)
With loud complaints he hauls the yards aback
Now on the " port "—now on the " starboard tack ;"

While waves increasing, to the hero's store
Of thousand sorrows add one sorrow more ;
A deadly nausea comes—the heaving ship
Bump'd by the angry surge appears to skip—
Soon on the wave-washed poop, with dark dismay
The hero seems to feel the deck give way ;
And vainly striving as a last resource,
Claws at each rope to stay him in his course,
Soon o'er the side he leans his pious head
And deadly sick seems mingling with the dead.

By law condemned, so up the treadmill's side,
The felon climbs with still-descending stride,
Holds on above, while all below gives way,
And clings to life, while chiding death's delay.

With some exceptions the classic “ Isles of Greece ” rather disappoint the lover of the picturesque ; seen from the sea they are all more or less bold and barren, fenced with sterile rocks almost entirely devoid of wood, except perhaps a stunted olive here and there, and generally clothed with grass which partakes of a reddish brown rather than of a green color.

The Candian mountains are perhaps the most striking features which one encounters in

a progress through what sea-faring men call "the arches," and we note in the diary of St. Vincent, that off the Morea he saw the summit of Mount Ida shining like gold at the distance of 102 miles.

After beating about Cape Malea for some time, a rattling breeze sprang up, and the transport rapidly passed "Old Ægina's rock and Idra's Isle," which as well as Cape Colonna, with its white marble temple of Minerva, marking the tomb of Themistocles, were descried at a distance; and amid foam and sea-mist the Fairy Queen swept through the Thermian passage, accompanied in its course by several classic looking craft, with little white sails branching outwards, resembling the wings of Icarus; and others of no less ancient model, with lofty prow and solitary square-rigged mast well for'd.

Once more in the open sea, the breeze headed, increasing to a fierce gale, and as the sun went down in a clear but stormy sky, it was found necessary to lay near to Skyro, the

wind piping, snoring and howling, through the blocks and rigging, and waves thundering against the bows. Towards morning the gale moderated, and the lofty blue outline of Lemnos appeared to the northward.

And here our muse, fatigued by the slowness of the voyage, leaves the "Fairy Queen" to her fate, whatever it may be, and proceeds to the ultimate destination of the transport by a much shorter cut.

CHAPTER III.

Deserted by the waning moon,
When skies proclaim night's cheerless noon,
On tower, fort, or tented ground
The sentry walks his lonely round.
ALL'S WELL.

"Il rauco suon della Tartarea tromba."
TASSO.

THE first bombardment had proved a failure.

An aid-de-camp had galloped up with a message from Canrobert to Lord Raglan to announce "Que le bastion du Mât, n'exis-te plus!" Nevertheless the bastion du Mât, as well as many other bastions, was just as noisy and destructive as ever.

Blount, since his arrival, encamped upon

Balaclava plain, and in temporary command of the regiment, grumbled a good deal at the state of inaction, and remonstrated more than once against the authority which took away his horses and men for fatigues, and left "the beasts" without cover.

One day towards the end of October our gruff acquaintance, in company with Bruce, who happened to be over at the Light Cavalry Camp, stood in front of his tent. He cast a sulky glance around him, taking in the rows of tents dark on one side with the afternoon's shower; the troop-horses picketted in irregular lines, occasionally kicking and biting each other, as a heavy thump, an answering squeal and a harsh "stand still, will ye!" attested; he next scanned the brown waste, backed by little eminences (called "heights," by Crimean chroniclers), and finally permitted his eye to rest upon the narrow gorge between the mountains on each side of the harbour, where the tower-capped hill of Balaclava does not quite shut out the level of the sea.

He observed a mounted dragoon coming towards him. It was our old friend Jeffries, and he was advancing at a rapid pace. As he neared the camp, he pulled up rather short upon a greasy spot. The horse slipped and came down, precipitating Jeffries over his head.

The Troop-Sergt.-major picked himself up, but seemed more engaged in an attempt to brush away the mud from his trowsers and sleeves, than in looking to see what had become of his charger.

"The nesty sleepery brut!" such was Jeffries' muttered soliloquy, "he slid folly three horses' lengths before he fell on his hade!"

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" roared Blount, making Jeffries start, for he had not observed that chance and his horse had thrown him almost at the very feet of his captain. "Bravo, Jeffries; take care of your over-alls, and don't mind the horse."

"There's no word of the 'Fairy Queen,' sir," said Jeffries, when he had recovered

himself; his horse being taken by a bătman,
“and thame stores is not come.”

“You don’t suppose they’d come before
the ship?”

“No, sir; but a steamer come in saw her
at Malta.”

At this moment sundry exclamations of
surprise and uncertainty burst from the
assembled group.

“Yes, it is.” “No, it isn’t—it can’t be.”
“What’ll you bet?” “Why, Prettyman!
how did you get here?”

“I have jutht awwived by electwic tele-
gwaph,” said Prettyman, for he it was. “I
thee I have come to wight thpot.”

A slight titter, which Prettyman did not
seem to mind, was the prelude to some expla-
nation regarding himself.

“And how are all the good folks at New-
ington,” demanded Bruce.

“All vewy flouwithing.”

“How’s Mrs. What’s-her-name, and her
lovely daughters?—you know who I mean.”

"Bwoadway? All pwetty well, I thank you."

Bruce did not seem to see how the wind lay, for he continued:

"The good lady didn't send her compliments to me, I suppose?"

"No," said Prettyman, "not that I wemember."

"Did she ever tell you how I took her down about her youngest daughter?"

"I cannot wecal the thircumhtanthe," returned the other a little stiffly.

"'Mrs. Broadway,' said I, 'it's all very fine your talk about the talents of that youngster of yours, but if she was mine, I'd have none of your trash of prodigies and stuff, but I'll tell ye what I'd do.' 'What?' says she. 'I'd give her a skelp and a glass of water, and send her to bed.'"

A peal of laughter rewarded this anecdote, which, however, was not at all approved of by Prettyman, and he would probably have made some remark to that effect if Blount had

not summoned the whole party to dinner at the instant.

As it grew dark, Bruce, Winter, Masters, Prettyman, and some others, having discussed some rations of salt pork, and some preserved meats, might have been discovered in a marquee, drinking port out of marmalade pots, and talking over several adventures which we should have much pleasure in detailing, but as they sent Blount into the land of Nod, we dread a similar result upon the reader.

When the worthy Captain had nearly tumbled off a bullock trunk for the third time—protesting nevertheless that he was wide awake—Winter suggested the diversion of cards in an adjoining tent. The suggestion was adopted, and a select party sat down to “loo,” which in this case was limited, and here we encounter our quondam young friend Wilmore, who had dined at his own camp, but had dropped in “after tea.”

At an earlier period, Wilmore had been in-

vited to join these convivial assemblies. He had at first declined.

"I don't see why you should refuse," said Winter; "you can't lose much, and may possibly win."

"But I don't care about cards," returned Wilmore, "and would just as soon not, if it's the same to you."

"As to its being of any consequence to me," said Winter, "I need not tell you that I don't care two straws whether you come or not. But your refusal to be sociable where everything is so dull, will, I feel confident, be differently viewed by others."

A little of this reasoning had its desired effect; but we cannot state that it quite suited the views of Mr. Winter that the tide of luck should set in steadily in favor of the neophyte. The remainder of the clique were certainly far from pleased, though they had accorded him a kind reception. On the present occasion, before the night had advanced very far, mur-

murings of discontent, which had been uttered before, became very audible.

"There goes Wilmore again! always the largest pool," said one.

"And I am loo'd!" said another.

"And so am I," echoed the general chorus, with groaning and anguish of heart.

"Pon my soul," said the first speaker, "it's too bad."

"We can't go on in this way," said another testily, "this fellow always goes away with his pockets full."

"Oh! you know?" said a third savagely, "this thing is perfectly ridiculous. This is the 17th night you have won steadily—you mustn't play here any more, Wilmore."

Wilmore laughed. The wrath of the party was increased, and some one was rash enough to add oaths to threats, and to swear that the common enemy should be *chasséd*.

"By George, I won't go though," said Wilmore, "you forced me to join you when I did not want to come, and now I choose to

stay. I begin to find I rather like these evenings."

This remark was received amidst the titters of some and the angry silence of the rest—the cards were shuffled and dealt and shuffled again—and the play went on so far into the night, that in spite of the deep interest which many took in it, the players were fain to take short naps between the acts, half rising from the ground to deposit a card on the old arm-chest, which formed the table and yielding to fatigue, sank into a reclining position, till their turn again came round.

Wilmore had as usual won everything; when as a finish some one suggested the game of "fright." This seemed to rouse the dormant energies of the players. Each in turn gained a victory, till at length Winter proposed a large stake. The rest, with one or two exceptions, acceded.

With trembling fingers and eager looks each clutched his card in turn, longing for the ace of spades, which Winter had named. Wil-

more alone seemed occupied with other thoughts. Winter drew forth the much coveted piece of pasteboard, and declared himself the winner of a thousand pounds.

"That card belongs to another pack," said Wilmore, "see, it is not so new as the rest. Confess now, Winter, that you changed it."

"Do you mean to accuse me of deception?"

Wilmore grew very red, and said "he thought he saw Winter drop a card a short time previously."

"You lie!" said Winter savagely, "and by ——, I'll call you out if you don't retract what you have said."

Too much excited to think of interfering, and perhaps really hoping in their frenzied state that what Wilmore had alleged was true, the party looked anxiously on the ground for the card said to have been dropped.

"Where is it, you silly young fool?" sneered Winter. "When you make assertions you ought to be able to prove them." As

he spoke he twitched up one or two rugs on which he and his companions had been reclining, and threw them one by one aside. "Where is it, dolt? Where is it, idiot?"

No card was to be seen. Wilmore looked puzzled and confounded.

"Stop," said Masters, "let us shake this one."

He picked up the rug on which Winter had been kneeling when the game commenced. He shook it. "With your permission," said he, as Winter offered another, "we must unfold this one first." He did so, out dropped a card—the ace of spades!

"What a singular accident!" exclaimed Winter, with perfect effrontery. "I'm sure," added he, "none of you dare to say that *I* put the card there. I presume, Mr. Wilmore, *you* will not. Indeed how do we know that you yourself are not the guilty person."

Winter was what is termed a dead shot; and possibly his friends dreaded to accuse him

of a crime, of which they had only strong suspicion; but Wilmore was excited, and he spoke out.

"I say, Mr. Winter, that I saw you drop that card!"

"Then take that, for a liar as you are," said Winter, slapping him across the face.

"Stop a minute," said Masters, suddenly stepping forward, while others interposed between the two disputants, "*you* are the liar, Winter, I *also* saw you drop the ace, and I believe you had the other concealed for—"

At this moment a trumpet in the distance sounded:—the call was taken up from regiment to regiment. For a moment there was a dead pause and each looked in wonder at his neighbour.

"What's that?" said one, "morning stables havn't gone yet, and it's as dark as pitch."

"The enemy! the enemy!" was the muttered reply, as sounds without betokened something unusual, "the enemy are upon us!"

The whole party rushed from the tent.

CHAPTER VI.

Now the storm begins to lower
(Haste, the loom of hell prepare),
Iron sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darkened air.
Sisters hence with spurs of speed ;
Each her thundering falchions wield,
Each bestride her sable steed ;
Hurry, hurry to the field !

THE FATAL SISTERS.

OF Rogers, our comic songster (who be it known is a member of the medical profession), we have said very little. Since the Alma, he had been placed on the staff, much against his will ; he flattered himself, however, that though separated from the " Loyal Britons," he had been lucky in finding an elevated and salubrious place of abode.

Eastward of the Genoese tower, perched on

the lofty crags which flank the narrow entrance of Balaclava harbour, the rugged cliffs rise rapidly till they reach an elevation nearly as great as the Rock of Gibraltar, and almost as steep as the most precipitous part of that gigantic rock. Upon the apex of this dizzy height rested the extreme right of the position, and here Rogers, having medical charge of some of the defenders of the Balaclava lines, had pitched his tent.

Our doctor, though not habitually an early riser, was up with the sun on the morning of the 25th, for the trumpets sounding in the plain below, together with certain intelligence received from the neighbouring outpost, had put every one on the *qui vive*, and all the detachments were under arms. Let us glance at the panorama that met his view as soon as morning had rolled away the banks of fog and wreaths of vapours which lay in the valley of the Tchernaya, or capped the mountainous ridge which walls it from the sea.

With his back to a precipice at the base of

which, a thousand feet below, lies the almost waveless Euxine ; the huge form of Cape Aya rearing itself a mile or two on his right hand, and the harbour of Balaclava, partially hid from view, nestling down at the bottom of the steep incline, 1500 yards to his left—Rogers, shading his eyes, looks upon the plains of Balaclava, spread like a map below him, athwart which the nearly level beams of the morning sun are cast. A glimpse of the blue Tchernaya river is just visible over some trifling eminences occupied by the Turks, in advance of the British lines ; and behind, at a distance of seven or eight miles, rises the wall of white rock surmounted by the dwarf forest, which, stretching from Mackenzie's farm to the ruins of Inkermann, forms the northern boundary of the valley of the Tchernaya. The gorge of that valley is here intercepted from view by the opposite heights of Inkermann, which again run into the plateau dotted with the far extended camps of the allies ; till round again to the westward, the

eye marks the greater elevations which lie between Balaclava and Cape Kerson.

The besieged city is hid from view, but under the line of the sea, over the extreme left of the plateau, those little three-masted specks denote the mighty floating armaments of France and England, hovering about the white forts at the entrance of Sebastopol.

Slanting down into the plain from the pinnacle where Rogers stands, is an entrenched line fronted by a zig-zag parapet, inside of which the thin perspective of conical tents—descending far away to the camp of the Light Cavalry and Kadikoi—shew the feeble force which defends Balaclava from an enemy which might bring guns upon that high copse-covered eminence across the ravine on the right hand.

There was something strange and savage in the coup d'œil, everywhere was baldness, barrenness, and solemnity. Even the sun seemed to glare wildly, as if portentous of surprise and disaster.

Rogers wrapped his cloak around him in closer folds, and his teeth chattered with the cold, for the air of that elevated spot was sharp and piercing.

"Where? Where? I don't see," said one of the last comers of the group around the doctor.

"There—Oh, it's you, Wilmore. Have you been up all night as usual? What have you won?"

"Nothing," returned Wilmore, with an agitated look. "I've just had time to put on my toggery. Where are they?" he repeated scanning the landscape beneath, "I can't see them."

"Can you make out Kamara? Look over the heads of those marines near my tent." He singled out a little knot of men from amongst those who were lining the parapet all the way down, and looking eagerly in the same direction.

"All right."

"Now look between Canrobert's hill, that's the one with the Turkish tents on it (designa-

ting the highest and nearest of the little eminences in advance of the British position in the plain below); there is a red patch on the near side."

"I see a square plantation."

"You see a part of the Russian army; observe the long string of them filing out of Kamara. There are more towards the Tchernaya, of which you get a glimpse in a line between this and Mackenzie's farm.

It was evident to all that our weakly-defended base of operations was threatened by an enormous hostile force; and while some turned their eyes anxiously northward across the plateau from whence alone reinforcements (however weakening to our front), must be despatched; others glanced at the small and scattered bands and half-finished line of parapet—the sole defence of the heights where they stood, or looked nervously at the high eminences eastward as if half-dreading the appearance of the foe in force from that quarter.

"By George!" said one, "I'm not a croaker,

but we have a deuced weak position here. What do you make the distance from this to the top of that hill, there?"

"Only 1,500 yards," was the reply of an Engineer officer.

"And 1,500 more from this down into the harbour?"

"About that—*point blanc*."

"If they once shoved us off this peak, and then down the steep incline, it would be hard work to fight one's way up again."

"Once here," said another, "a shell or a carcase from a field piece or small mortar, might set ships and all in a blaze."

The idea was a very unpleasant one, and Rogers looked at the calm sea washing the base of the precipice on which they stood, where a few transports were riding at anchor, as he said:

"'Pon my soul, it would be a shabby trick, and if they try it on, I take my oath I'll shew no mercy to their wounded."

At this moment a field battery, or else one

of the guns manned by the Marine Artillery near the bottom of the hills, and just out of sight, commenced firing, and the Greys were seen moving towards Canrobert's hill, from which there came a bright flash and a puff of smoke, announcing the Turks (or the solitary gunner more probably) taking a shot at the Russians. The enemy replied warmly, and shortly afterwards clouds of Cossacks moved forward in skirmishing order. It was also evident that the dark battalions from the side nearest the village of Kamara, were in motion, and behind the bayonets of the foremost dense columns of infantry which here and there flashed in the sunlight, some thought they detected six or eight guns, with pale green carriages, closely following.

These were in fact the arguments by which Liprandi was persuading the regiment of Odessa to advance.

The first result of the enemy's movement was a commotion amongst the turbans and fez caps in the lunette; while upon the

heights, everyone who had not come to the conclusion before, now became painfully aware of the weakness of our advanced posts. Far away from all support, in a wide expanse, formed by a re-entering angle of our feebly-defended lines, how could it be expected that the few miserable troops, posted on trifling elevations, and in earthworks of the most paltry nature, could hold out for more than a few minutes?

The sombre columns came up the hill, a few muskets were discharged in the lunette, down fell the crescent standard, replaced by a Russian ensign, and away went the sons of the prophet, some running down the steep slope, and some pitched headlong from the low crags, which scarped one portion of it, and hard after them followed the high-capped, shaggy-coated, gentlemen, with their shabby horses and long lances. Thus the poor creatures were tumbled over and shot, like rabbits, or speared like wild hogs.

The spectators soon foresaw that the rest of

the detached entrenchments would be threatened in turn; and, already, there was a movement of consternation in out-work No. 2.—Rogers had his telescope levelled at the spot, when a hospital orderly disturbed his investigations with—

“I beg your pardon, sir, but Dr. —— sends his compliments, and he wants you down at Kadikoi directly!”

Rogers hastened to comply with the order, and took the route by the village of Balaclava, as a matter of precaution (for the Cossacks seemed to be approaching unpleasantly near), and ran along the road past the grave-yard, and so on to Kadikoi. Long ere he had reached the spot where the medical officer awaited him, his friends on the lofty peak had groaned over the total route of all the Tunisians, and the loss of our advanced works.

There was a good deal of stir and jingle near the Light Cavalry Camp, towards which his guide led him, but the rattle of rifles, and

the banging of our batteries, to which the enemy were occasionally replying, drowned all other sounds. Everywhere he went there was either alarm, or expectation. Turks were straggling in from the front with their goods and chattels on their backs, and occasionally prostrating themselves in the direction of Mecca. Women were hurrying to the rear, with small articles, the property of their husbands. Troops were moving rapidly down the valley. Along the ridge of the plateau, as far as the Woronzoff road, the French seemed to be all on the look-out, and staff and A.D.C.'s, were galloping in all directions, with messages, orders, and counter-orders.

In this scene of bewilderment, the proceedings of three fair amazons, specially arrested the attention of Rogers. They had intercepted the flight of several Turks, who were making the best of their way towards Balaclava.

"Gae back, ye dirrty loons," said the tallest of the trio, taking the initiative, by administering a cuff on each ear of the foremost

gaping runaway. "Gae back, wi' that in your lug. Hech! leddies, we maun stop the flytin' o' these cowardly deevils, it's like they hae eatit the dinners of the 93rd, as they cam by, for ye see they hae their mouths fu'. Gie yon guse a clout wi' the pan, Misthress Mc'Shenkin."

A ringing metallic noise òn the head of a gentleman, attired in a blanket-colored fly, and dark blue, baggy nether garments, shewed that Mrs. Mc'Shenkin had adopted at once the suggestion of her fair companion, and meantime the third lady, attacking the enemy generally, made brisk and liberal application of a broken tent-pole, which she had been carrying away as firewood.

"Mashalla! Mashalla!" screamed the wretched delinquent pang—pang—pang—went the culinary utensil, and crack—went the cudgel.

"Siccan a disgrace! give them their licks, cummers," shouted the spokeswoman of the party, whilst the remainder emitted screams

of revengeful triumph, and continued the onslaught with increased vigour. But here Rogers was disturbed by the apparition of a very cross-looking elderly gentleman in a cocked hat. "Mr. Rogers," said the medical officer who had sent for him, advancing in great excitement. "I've been waiting for you, Sir."

"I came as quickly as I could," was the short reply of Rogers.

"That will do, Sir," returned the other tartly, "you have your instruments, I presume—you see that white cottage?" (he pointed to one in the open plain, not many hundred yards from the outworks which the enemy now quietly occupied). "You will proceed there with the least possible delay."

"What for, Sir?" asked Rogers.

"What for, Sir?" returned the medical officer in authority, "because I order you, sir—you will attend to any wounded men, sir, who may be brought there, sir."

"Am I to understand that it is your plea-

sure, that I am to go to the middle of Balaclava plain in advance of the troops, sir?" said Rogers.

"I have given you an ORDER, sir," was the loud and angry reply, "you will be so good as to OBEY it instantly, sir. You perceive there is an English Field Battery not far from the spot I have indicated."

"Confound you for an ignorant, stupid, domineering old donkey!" said Rogers, between his teeth as his senior departed, "why, it's almost within rifle shot of the enemy!"

There was, however, nothing for it but to comply. Yet he was more than once near turning back ere he reached the spot which had, probably, been appointed under the impression that the advanced works recently lost would be immediately re-taken by us.

Rockets whizzed fiercely on one side, and round shot and diaphragm cleft the air with a sharp and angry noise on the other, and (as is generally the case with persons little accustomed to the sounds of such missiles) those

from our own side, caused him fully as much anxiety as those of the enemy.

Rogers gained the lee side of the white cottage, and throwing himself flat among the stones and thistles, prepared for instant death.

The shelter afforded by the wall contributed, however, to re-assure the Doctor, whom we are bound to confess was certainly most inconsiderately dealt with. It was some consolation to him to find that the deadly missiles did not fly very close; there appeared also to be something of a forward movement, suggesting the possibility of a general advance, in which case his present position might be one of safety, if not of usefulness. To his disgust, however, the field batteries (having expended all their ammunition) began to retire, and one actually passed him, quite near enough for him to see the faces of the men, and to observe that some trifling loss had been sustained, for wounded were supported on the limbers, and maimed horses were led slowly to the rear, and he soon saw the

whole of our guns falling back (except one battery on the extreme right) while showers of grape rattled about him in most dangerous proximity, rendering impossible the retreat, which he naturally was most anxious to make. Dust, stones, and fragments of red tiles and mortar from the roof and angles and corners of the cottage, were knocked up by those horrible missiles, and when there came a momentary lull over the great desert plain he found that a new danger threatened him.

A dull, heavy, continuous sound announced the approach of cavalry, and almost before he was aware, a numerous body swept past in the direction of Balaclava; one glance at the cut of their caps, their deep saddles, and their long grey coats, sufficed to shew who and what they were, and they moved rapidly on as Rogers threw himself once more at full length upon the ground, in momentary expectation of being discovered and hacked to pieces by cavalry sabres.

It was scarcely a relief when he found that he had escaped observation, for the horsemen about 700 strong, proceeded towards Balaclava, cutting off his retreat on that side, and at the same moment he became aware of the existence of a much larger body on his other flank.

"Death and the sun," says a cynic philosopher, "cannot be steadfastly regarded by mortals;" and Rogers was not more of a stoic than his neighbours. It is not wonderful therefore that with his case of instruments and cocked hat, as his sole defences (for the sword which he did not know how to use need not be mentioned) Rogers experienced a sickening sensation of alarm.

It was evident, however, that there was other game in view, and this larger body (which was in fact the *elite* of the Russian cavalry) did not diverge to its left, but moved onwards, with their gaze directed on their English opponents, who had formed up in rear of the Light Cavalry camp.

Meantime the other force was proceeding towards Balaclava, where the appearance of a few of the staff, near a small line of Highlanders, shewed that Sir Colin Campbell was watching the advancing enemy. There was first a scattered discharge of muskets, and then the Highlanders were left by themselves, but nevertheless wholly immovable. Presently a glittering line of steel was presented at the foe. There was a burst of smoke, a well-timed discharge, followed by the ringing of ramrods, and a second volley.

The Russians had slackened their pace at the first report, and inclined to their left, as if to follow the Turks, who had sought safety in flight; but Captain Ross had wheeled up the grenadiers, and as a second shower of bullets whistled among their ranks, the Russians turned their backs, leaving a wreath of laurels with the 93rd.

The despair of Rogers now gave way to more pleasurable feelings, and perceiving that in the hurry-skurry of the retreat he again es-

caped the notice of the enemy, he prepared to imitate their laudable example.

“Now may I be shot if I stand this any longer,” was his appropriate exclamation, as he sprang to his feet, “and may the devil take the old booby who sent me here, to a place where no one had a chance of being wounded except myself.”

So saying he darted off in the direction of Sir Colin Campbell as fast as his legs could carry him.

Now it so happened that while the defeated body of horse went back whence they came, some Cossack skirmishers were on the alert to cover the retreat in case of accident, and before Rogers had gone twenty yards, he became aware of one of these gentry with a long spear coming down on him in an oblique direction, at a hand gallop. Rogers accelerated his pace and the Cossack used his spurs. Ping! ping! went two friendly rifle-balls, without however touching the savage, who was rapidly intercepting the retreat of the Doctor.

The result might easily have been guessed. In another minute poor Rogers was obliged to fall back upon the cottage, with the full consciousness of the unpleasant proximity of the point of a Cossack lance to the small of his back. We must leave him for the present making a circuit of the cottage, keenly pursued by the hairy savage, who lost a few lengths in consequence of his steed having put his foot into a hole.

CHAPTER V.

“Above the tide each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light;
Each targe was dark below.
And with the ocean's mighty swing
When heaving to the tempest's wing
They hurled them on the foe.”

LADY OF THE LAKE.

IN the meantime the great body of the Russian cavalry had moved forward at a pace which though rapid at first, was momentarily subsiding into a walk. In green and gold, in blue and silver, with furred pelisses, and jackets richly embroidered on the breast and sleeve; with costly shabracques, and all the glitter of a gorgeous equipment—the front ranks came crowding on against the vastly in-

ferior force, half screened and half entangled by the Light Cavalry camp.

The full peril of the movement was felt by those whom we left an hour ago on the high peak above Balaclava, and who now saw plainly that upon two short lines of British dragoons, perhaps depended the safety of our base of operations.

They were not long left in suspense. The eagerly-expected word was given, and tearing amongst tent cords and gyes, and stumbling over pegs, posts, and picket ropes, with their gallant leader at their head—forward went the bold dragoons against the crowded masses of the enemy, which pressing on at each flank over-lapped and enclosed them.

The shock was not half so great as “the Heavies” would have wished—a yell burst from the Russians, and pistols were discharged at the Greys and Inniskillens, who grinding their teeth and gripping their sabres, exchanged point and cut, and then hacked and slaugh-

tered their foes, pressing them still farther and farther back.

And now it is time for their comrades to join. Outdarted the Royals and 5th Dragoon Guards, in a flank attack, and off flies the hostile swarm in wild retreat, while high in the air flash the avenging swords of the pursuers, and "swashing blows" fall quick and heavy upon Russian heads.

Among the victorious ranks there were few more distinguished combatants than a certain private of dragoons, whom we once encountered on the shady road near Clare Hall; and we mark his form, like that of an avenging deity, as he rides among his retreating foes.

It was afterwards related how Paul Bold, with one cut, severed from the body of a Russian an arm, which had levelled a pistol at his Colonel's head; and how when the same Colonel's horse had been killed in the pursuit, by a rifle bullet—the gallant dragoon

adroitly disarmed and unhorsed a Russian Captain of Hussars, requested him politely to proceed to the English Camp as a prisoner, presented the Colonel with the steed of the dismounted cavalier, and to the very mouths of the supporting guns, continued to follow the flying host, dealing about him such blows as would have done honor to Excalibar in the hands of King Arthur.

Half unconscious, or perhaps indeed something reckless of the fire of artillery and riflemen in his front, Paul Bold pursued his foes so far, that upon looking behind, he discovered that he had outstripped all his companions, who were slowly retiring to the ground they had occupied before the encounter. He was not the only person who made the same observation, however, for at least a dozen of the enemy, apparently acting in concert, commenced closing in upon him in such a fashion that in a very brief space he found himself completely surrounded and menaced with destruction at all points of the compass.

Turning suddenly about, he made violent application of the spur. His "trooper," a large and powerful animal, went forward like an advancing wave, and burst the circle, while the rider receiving two cuts with the seventh guard, and parrying a thrust delivered point to the rear with some effect, and was presently clear of his antagonists, who probably only too glad to be rid of so dangerous a customer, seemed to have no mind for the pursuit.

But Paul Bold had still another task to perform; for as he moved towards the point where "the Heavies" were again mustering, his attention was arrested by a voice calling for assistance, and he immediately perceived a British officer with his hands secured behind his back by means of a cambric handkerchief, in the act of being trotted off the field in the direction of Liprandi, escorted by two Cossacks, one of whom had exchanged head-gear with the prisoner, being somewhat ludicrously attired in the cocked hat of a medical officer.

The captive, it may be guessed, was no other than our poor friend whom we left in imminent peril near the white house in the plain.

He had fallen an easy prey to his pursuers, and had met with rough usage, to judge by the tattered state of his uniform, from which epaulettes and buttons had been torn away.

"Help! H-e-l-p!" screamed the Doctor, with loud accents, but faint hope.

Away went Paul Bold to the rescue, and sweeping to the front of the trio, he charged the right hand man, with such impetuosity, as to upset Cossack, horse and all. A second, who was in reserve, charged in turn, but Paul avoiding a meeting with considerable dexterity, delivered a cut, which tumbled his antagonist as he passed, and turning, rushed at the remaining portion of the Doctor's escort, who was using every effort to hasten the departure of his prisoner. This savage, however, having perceived the treatment which his comrades had experienced, no sooner saw himself menaced, than he relinquished his post by the side

of Rogers, and discharging a pistol at Paul, happily without effect, made good his retreat.

To seize the wild pony by the bridle, and to release the captive, was naturally the first care of the dragoon, and he had nearly succeeded in freeing the Doctor's manacled hands, which were painfully bound together with a piece of cord in addition to the handkerchief, when from the ground, where he had been upset, up bounded Cassack No. 1, and, before Paul was aware, cut with one of the Doctor's surgical instruments the reins of the dragoon's horse, and with a sudden jerk tore them from the rider's hands.

Paul let go the Doctor, and drawing his sword, which he had just sheathed, made a blow at his enemy, but missed him, for his horse, quite unmanageable, started off at a wild gallop, while Paul vainly tugged at the head-collar chain, and snatched at the severed "bit and bridoon."

The instincts of the troop horse carried him safely to the ranks of his comrades; while

other instincts carried poor Rogers, as safely over the ridge to the enemy.

• • • •

A suppressed hum of voices—the jingling of collar chains—the shuffling and stamping of hoofs, varied by an occasional neigh—denote the spot where the English Light Cavalry await orders.

In the foremost rank, the gay pennons of the Lancers flutter conspicuously beside the shining blades of the Light Dragoons. In the next line, we detect the dull red trowsers of the Brigadier's own regiment. In the third, more hanging pelisses, drooping plumes, and breasts covered with yellow braid, or gold lace.

The stifled murmur breaks out occasionally in noisy question and answer, brisk challenge and repartee, or in short peals of ringing laughter.

In front of Captain Blount's troop, however,

there were some remarks passed which did not savour exactly of mirth.

“Are you certain of it?” said a deep voice.

“Oh, yeth, quite pothetic, and Mathterth can pwoove it, altho’.”

“Do you mean to say,” growled the first speaker, knitting his brow, “that he distinctly substituted a marked card, and secreted the other?”

“I can swear to it,” said Masters. And while he spoke, down the line, of which Captain Blount’s regiment formed a part, went a muttered sound of “Cheat!” “Leg!” “Scoundrel!” and “Blackguard!” while Winter sat immoveable on his horse, with his nose in the air, as usual, and his countenance set in an expression of cold indifference.

“Why didn’t you report this before,” said Blount, “or why didn’t somebody put the d—d swindler in arrest? Wilmore shan’t meet him, and I shall send him to——”

Here a dead silence arrested the attention of Blount, and without completing the sen-

tence, he moved away, to hear what an Aide-de-camp was saying to the Earl of Lucan.

It was not long before the upshot of a memorable conversation became known, and the objects and perils of charging the Russian army were briefly canvassed, while Masters and others found time to fling a remark or two, in the direction of Winter.

"Look at the thief!" said the former.

"Blount has forgotten him," said another.

"Send him to the rear, out of this," shouted a third.

"No, let him stay and be killed," said a fourth.

"Keep together," echoed a score of voices.

"You thee," said Prettyman, in explanation to a comrade, as he pressed his cap tighter on his head preparatory to the charge, "if we don't attack them they'll attack uth, tho perhaph we'd better go firht."

Blount keenly eyed the new sub., bestowing upon him a grim smile of approbation, and at that instant the word was given, and the

Light Brigade began to move down the *Valley of Death*.

Well was it so named. Doubtless fiends in hell exulted in the prospect of the "butcher work" which shortly "there befel."

The low thunder of the moving squadrons and the waving of their plumed crests, are the signal for the Russians to unlimber all their guns, and sponge and rammer are busy on the instant. More than a score of wide brazen throats swallow the iron messenger of death, to belch it forth again when the appointed moment arrives. Thousands of nervous arms are at work forcing down glittering tubes the smaller, but not less fatal, pill of lead; and now a score of portfires are lighted and a thousand fingers press the trigger.

The Light Brigade had not yet broken "the trot" when, sounding from the left of the valley, with distant report, the herald of mischief flew towards the squadrons, and the first shell exploded, smiting the gallant but too hasty soldier who had urged compliance with

a too hasty order. He falls from his prancing charger, and death seals the lips which might have said "Forbear!"

Meantime onward dance the haughty crests of the English, with an undulating motion which tells of accelerated pace. Friends gaze in sad amazement from the heights behind. Oh for a voice, loud as thunder, to halt the Light Brigade! Oh for a trumpet tongue to call them back again! but no, the thought is vain and hopeless as a dream. Fate irresistible beckons to a dreadful doom, which obedience decrees and courage will not evade; and for the honor of old England they make the desperate charge.

A bright spark hovered an instant above each Russian gun, and then from a wide semicircle bursts forth the storm of destruction, with flash upon flash, cloud upon cloud, and roar upon roar!

Down go man and horse, struck by the wand of death—some falling forwards and biting the dust, others hurled backwards with

tremendous impetus; though as yet there is no bodily enemy to grapple with.

There were gaps left in Blount's troop and empty saddles, but the officers are still untouched, for though Masters falls, it is but a stumble over the torn carcase of a charger, and all ride on in the grim chase, while Blount's face is darkened by a stern and solemn expression. Enveloped in smoke, the whole thing seems like some strange and awful vision, and with clank and clatter they hurry on and on, the terrible iron hurricane roaring through the decimated ranks. *The guns are before them*—this is the only tangible idea—*the guns which they are to take.*

Almost blinded by the blue vapour, the foremost ranks arrive at the muzzles of the heavy battery, where for a moment the instinct of discipline keeps the smoke-begrimed gunners at their posts. One more deadly discharge shattering man and horse in horrible variety, and, like a fierce blast of wind, the remnant of the Light Brigade sweeps through the in-

tervals. The roar of artillery ceases, and sabres take fearful vengeance on the late executioners, who crouch beneath gun and limber, behind wheels, under the bellies of gun horses.

Blount foremost of his regiment, cleft a man to the chine, who was raising a port-fire. Masters wounded another who was brandishing a sponge. Prettyman captured a gun, putting the gunners to flight.

But there is no time to pause, and they still fly forward pell-mell, for now all is wild excitement, and the Death shower is forgotten.

The Russian army, appalled by the terrific onslaught, wavers before its desperate adversaries; but the latter cannot pursue beyond a certain distance—a hopeless enterprise. Enough,—ah! sadly too much—has been done for glory, and the foe is circling round to hem in the shattered remains of that noble Brigade.

It is not our business to dwell upon exploits and names which are chronicled in history,

neither does it avail us to dilate further upon the prodigies of valour performed by Blount, Prettyman, and the little cornet, before they turned to retrace their path through another tempest of rifle-balls and cannon shot, and cut a road through their enemies back to the English lines.

Blount, with the same dark frown upon his face, heads his men against the intercepting force, but it is his death ride. While the command to "charge" yet hangs upon his lips, a rifle bullet performed its mission; a red mist obscures his sight—the bridle-hand relaxes its grasp, the sword is dropped, and the noble, gallant soldier falls from his saddle a corpse!

Of the noble exertions which were made to extricate the remnants of the Light Brigade, of the chivalrous assistance of the Chasseurs d'Afrique to divert the attention of the enemy, or of the blind and reckless fury of the last in indiscriminately overwhelming friend and

foe in a renewed deluge of deadly missiles we need not discourse.

The decimated heroes returned, few altogether untouched, and many of them torn, wounded and bloody.

The wild charge has passed over like a hurricane, leaving nothing but the traces of devastation and ruin behind. A dreary plain strewn with the bodies of the wounded, dying, and dead! The maimed and mutilated beast, with his military trappings, which shares the pain, but not the glory of the day, presents a horrible spectacle, as he wheels round and round, and falls, and rises, but to fall again; while others, riderless but untouched in the *melée*, gallop hither and thither, as if still mad with terror, or stand quietly beside the motionless form of their late owner. Let us turn away from the sadder phase of the scene, and cry—all honor to the heroes of Balaclava! Their desperate chivalry saved our brave operations, struck terror into the

foe, and crowned the anniversary of Agincourt with a fresh wreath of unfading laurel.

• • • • •

“Blount ! poor Blount ! and where is Pretty-man ?”

“I fear either dead or a prisoner,” returned Masters. “He was seen to dismount when Blount fell—and that is all I know about him—he behaved in a deuced plucky way all through.”

The same was not said of Winter. Ill would it become us to condemn, or to appear to cast even the shadow of a stigma upon an officer of the Light Brigade ; still less upon one who bears the surname of “Winter,” for there was an officer of that name (whom we ourselves knew) who upon that day fell nobly in his country’s cause.

It was whispered, however, that Ralph, though known to have possessed the ferocity of a tiger on other occasions, turned about ere

the charge was half ended ; and on the two-fold accusation of cowardice and dishonesty at cards, he was placed in arrest at the conclusion of the day.

We have not time to investigate the matter, being impelled by duty to go in search of our hero, who, while we have been engaged with the enemy on the field of Balaclava, has passed through the *Ægean* sea, the *Dardanelles*, the sea of *Marmora* and the *Bosphorus*, and has for some days been tossing in the *Euxine*.

CHAPTER VI.

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far from love and thee.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

It was late in the afternoon of a winter's day, when a dim hazy outline looming in the distance* announced to our friends in the Fairy Queen their proximity to the Crimea.

A light breeze propelled the ship, which ploughing slowly through the waves, as if hesitating to approach a scene of dubious strife, cast the waters aside with a feeble rushing sound, above which the deep booming of gun answering gun, shewed that the beleaguered .

* Printer's devil objects

city had not yet fallen into the hands of the Allies. There is something of majestic solemnity in the distant roar of artillery; each quivering explosion, which seems to cause the very air to shudder, may be the knell of some braveman—may quench some buoyant spirit—may shed a sad gloom for many a long day over a once cheerful fireside. At first, like the deepest note of an organ in some great cathedral, the long thunder of the guns was rather a vibration felt than a perceptible sound, but as twilight crept over the black* waters where the armaments of France and England prowled—the watchful guardians of the deep—each discharge became more plainly audible, and during the night the horizon began to be illuminated by momentary flashes resembling sheet lightning.

Morning dawned. The sun red and stormy glared from an angry sky, over a rugged out-

* The waters of the Euxine are black, not only in name, but in fact. This is possibly the result of the continual influx of fresh water.

line of coast, now not more than twenty miles distant, and luridly lighted up the tawny waves which like ramping lions plunged athwart the ship's course.

This outline, in shape like an inclined plane, commenced with the low promontory of Cape Kherson—recognised by its lighthouse—and rising gradually, terminated in Cape Aya, a bold, abrupt, and frowning precipice, 2,000 feet in height. Nearer and nearer yet drew the inhospitable shores, till at length the clustering masts of French men-of-war were distinguished over Cape Kherson; the convent of St. George glimmered white on the summit of the cliffs about the centre of the incline, and through a gap further to the right, the morning fog rolling off, discovered the tents of the English clustering up the side of a steep ridge. This encampment, which seemed to shelter itself from some unseen enemy over the crest, marked the extreme right of the Balaklava lines, which, as we have elsewhere mentioned, rested on a peaked

hill, with perpendicular face of rock 1,000 feet above the sea.

To a mind not uninstructed in classic lore, this rugged, dreary, barren, and inhospitable-looking coast is invested with no small interest.

Our hero did not forget the shipwreck of Orestes, nor did he fail to hazard a conjecture as to the probable identity of the site of the temple of Diana with that of the monastery of St. George. It was not a time, however, to dwell on such topics, and he found other occupation in speculating as to the possible issue of the mighty war in which the two greatest of the Western Powers were now united. Would France and England, like the shipwrecked wanderers who formerly had the mishap to be dashed upon this terrible iron-bound coast, fall upon the bloody altars of a vindictive enemy, or would Pylades and Orestes come forth triumphant from the struggle?

"Sebastopol not taken," had been the news at Constantinople, and some garbled reports of

the action at Balaclava on the 25th. October had been collected from one or two freight-ships. There was plenty of room for conjecture, and so our hero gazed hard at the iron-bound coast, along the base of which the white line of surf occasionally heaved into a sheet of foam, or burst in feathery spray over a promontory or projecting mass of rock.

Where was the desired haven? was now the subject of discussion. Had they mistaken their bearings? Not a sign of an opening was distinguishable in that formidable wall of rock which the telescope scanned from end to end. It was the first time that the "Fairy Queen" had tempted the waters of the Euxine, and there was not a soul on board who could tell where Balaclava hid itself. The Skipper was bent upon doubling the Capes of Aya and Saritche, but the sharp eye of St. Vincent happening to detect a ruined tower upon a cliff something lower than the rest, reference was made to the chart, and the ship stood in, not without a misgiving on the part of Pal-

nurus that a mare's nest had been discovered. It was not long before the masts of a man-of-war, just visible above the interlacing capes which mark the narrow entrance into Balaclava dispelled the doubts of the incredulous. Up went the transport's number, but in vain they looked for an answer; for the inert telegraph near the ruined tower vouchsafed not the sign of an answer. While the ship, beating about, hesitated to enter the little land-locked harbour without permission, all eyes were turned upon the shores, which bleak and desolate, but at the same time majestic in their barrenness, seemed to tell of triumph over former civilization, of which the gray and ruined Genoese fortress was the dismal monument.

Evening saw our friends far from the coast, for a freshening breeze and a lee shore warned them to bid good night to Balaclava. A gale of wind detained the impatient gentlemen on board the "Fairy Queen," and it was with feelings of intense satisfaction that St. Vin-

cent, two days later, found the good ship in tow of a steamer moving at an accelerated speed within rifle shot of the old Genoese tower, which perched on its rock, and reflecting the yellow gleam of a declining sun, bore, in our hero's opinion, a striking resemblance to the "castled crag of Drachenfels."

Heaved in grotesque shapes and twisted in knots and gnarls, these rugged formations of rock, almost as bald at the summit as elsewhere, present a peculiarly arid appearance, relieved only by isolated tufts of juniper or other dark-colored shrub. At the further side of the harbour mouth, a craggy mass rears itself aloft like a huge dungeon-keep, and on its face is a blood-red stain. Few scenes more wild and dreary can be found.

The sun was now on the verge of the horizon, and his transient splendour was soon obscured by the watery vapours which closed around his fast sinking disk. The "Fairy Queen" entered the narrow, deep port which was crowded with shipping, and once more

the chain cable ran out with a rattling noise, and the anchor dived into thirty fathoms of water.

As the lights began to twinkle through the dense little forest of masts, the rain, which had been falling all day with a brief period of cessation at sunset, again descended, but nevertheless the greater portion of the draughts was ordered to disembark at once, and proceed up to "the front."

A staff officer, with whom St. Vincent was unacquainted, informed the latter that arrangements would be made for their reception in the camp of the — division, where he would meet him on his arrival.

This officer told St. Vincent that it was rumoured that very large reinforcements had arrived in Sebastopol, and that the assault would probably be made in a day or two. He also mentioned, amongst other scraps of intelligence, that Howard was in command of the regiment, Dobson sick at Scutari, and

Bruce on the staff. He then left our hero to look after some stores, which had been confided to his care, and which had to be unshipped there and then, as the "Fairy Queen" was under orders to return to Constantinople instanter. A junior officer was in the mean time deputed to march the detachments to their destination.

The rain was still falling heavily as St. Vincent—his task completed—prepared to follow his little force, accompanied by his servant, and a few Turks and Crim Tartars, whom he had pressed into the service for the purpose of carrying his baggage.

Making the best of his way amongst heaps of timber and forage, and piles of heterogeneous stores, for which no cover had been obtained, he threaded the narrow, miry lanes of the wretched village, feebly illuminated by an occasional lantern or lighted window, and passing a fountain, which came bubbling and roaring out of the rocky hill-side, soon left

behind him the deep and narrow basin, with steep craggy sides and tower-capped rock looming dark through the slanting shower.

It fared ill with his baggage. The fog lay heavy in the valley of Balaclava. Tartar and Turk had lost their way, and stuck in the mud, and he was obliged to leave his goods and his escort in a Turkish encampment, into which he had wandered.

This was far from encouraging, and his prospect of reaching the — Division at all became rather doubtful as he went floundering on without chart or compass, through little basin-like pools in which vine stocks had previously flourished. Some friendly Highlanders suggested a change of direction, and passing a Greek church and a little brawling torrent, St. Vincent ascended the plateau, and after wandering, in company with his single domestic, in the fog—over deserts of rough stones or tracts of mud, past parks of artillery and through endless lines of tents, only relieved by occasional feeble illu-

mination from lamps within, or smouldering embers without—he at length passed the tower of an old windmill, and, after a ten mile trudge, arrived cold, wet, and cheerless at the camp of the —— Division. One tent was conspicuous, transparently shining against the dark sky, like a paper lantern; and from the opening a figure stepped forth as St. Vincent inquired for the commanding officer.

He hears his name called in friendly accents, for Bruce had recognised his voice. He enters the tent as Howard and Winslow spring from the ground and wring his hand with friendly grasp. And now comes kind inquiry and hearty reply, while they force upon the new comer such scanty refreshment as a state of privation permits. 'Twere as needless to describe how they plied their ancient ally with hot grog, and gave him the only dry coat which they could muster, as to attempt to detail the scores of things which they had to say to one another.

Suffice it to state that the kind welcome to

the damp canvas dwelling, which afforded little more than a covering * from the inclement sky, was as gratefully received as the most costly invitation ever given from Royal palace to distinguished guest.

The victim of misfortune, harassed by the anxiety of hope deferred, and oppressed with the cares of disappointed affection (for here we must announce the receipt of a letter which had given him acute pain), forgot for the moment his doubts, misgivings, and distresses, in the smiles of true friendship.

Much had the soldiers to relate of perils past and laurels won, and long they talked of old times and scenes of harmless enjoyment, for the meeting called up a hundred associations of bye-gone days, till at length wearied nature prevailed, the dim lamp was extinguished, and huddling together for warmth, these old companions and staunch friends sank into profound repose.

* It appears that the officers of the "Loyal Britons," like many others, lost all their kit at the disembarkation in "Calamity" Bay.

The night was starless; and though the rain had ceased to fall, cold mists hung heavily over the dreary plateau, where, except the feeble watch-fires, and the occasional cry of the sentinel, all in that vast camp was as dark and silent as if the beleaguering armies had been chilled by the deadly blast which smote the hosts of Sennacherib. But hark!—what sound is that which the damp wind—stirring the sere leaves of the copse, and agitating feebly the wet folds of the canvas at the opening of the tent,—brings to the ear of the sleeper and alters the current of his dreams?

Far over the sea fancy has wafted St. Vincent. Gone is the cheerless Crimean sky. Vanished those sterile plains with their mantle of fog. The sun smiles on the gay English landscape, and the flowers of early June perfume the air. From an old church tower, among elms and sycamores, comes forth a measured chime; while she whom he loves

so fondly, crowned with orange blossoms, softly whispers that the bridal morn has come at last.

Phantom of hope vainly cherished—not for a bridal swings yon distant bell. Amid the glare of torches and the pomp of gorgeous ritual, and with chant and hymn—heard only by the demon of war—priestly art excites to frenzy the half-barbarous host which at dawn of day will burst upon the English lines.

Faintly borne upon the night-wind from the beleaguered city comes the slow and solemn knell—toll ! toll ! toll !—prophetic of to-morrow's winding sheet, and of the grave gaping for ten thousand dead. The wakeful listener feels his flesh creep at the portentous warning, which seems drearily moaning—“Earth to earth ! ashes to ashes ! dust to dust !”

But now the sound has ceased ; the dream, too, has faded away ; silence reigns over camp and city. On the cold ground upon the

heights of Inkermann the soldiers sleep calm and peacefully, unconscious of the coming event, which casts a black, though unseen shadow before it.

CHAPTER VII.

Friend of the brave, in peril's darkest hour
Intrepid virtue looks to thee for pow'r.
To thee the heart its trembling homage yields,
On stormy floods and carnage-covered fields
When front to front the banner'd hosts combine,
Halt, ere they close, and form the dreadful line;
When all is still on death's devoted soil,
The march-worn soldier mingles for the toil;
As rings his glittering tube, he lifts on high
The dauntless brow and spirit-speaking eye;
Hails in his heart the triumph yet to come,
And hears thy stormy music in the drum.

CAMPBELL.

THE rattle of musketry! the roar of heavy guns! Such is the reveillé of the 5th. November, 1854. Howard shakes St. Vincent with violence. They rush from the tent into the murky air without, where the men, bewildered by the fog, the darkness, and the uproar,

scarcely know where to expect the unseen enemy.

All is surprise and confusion. Round shot flies past with angry rush, and shells fall bursting—scattering irreparable ruin. Here a tent is torn into fragments, there a heavy mass of iron hurls a victim to the earth, and dashes far down amongst the cavalry horses near the windmill.

Bruce was already mounted, and, in company with General —, was endeavouring to peer through the fog and gloom.

The Loyal Britons have hurriedly fallen in, and are now moved up the gradual incline to the top of the ridge, and then down the slope on the further side in the direction of the head of Sebastopol harbour. The pickets falling back from the enemy were presently in sight; and the tidings of dismay which they brought were confirmed. A strange murmur is heard, mingled with the thunder of guns and cracking of musketry. It swells louder and louder, and a moving multitude

suddenly come into view, crowding up dark ravines and slopes covered with brush-wood.

The Loyal Britons, with some other regiments, and half a battery of artillery, were ordered to take up a position behind, and on either side, of a small entrenchment with two short flanks and two embrazures.

On the right flank of this work the steep slope descends into the deep valley of the Tchernaya, which here, scarcely a mile broad, is faced on the opposite side by a chalky perpendicular precipice dotted with caves in several lines and crowned by the ruins of Inkermann. But the mist fills the valley, and nothing is to be seen on that side. In the immediate front is a spur, and to the left front two ravines—the further one traversed by the Simpheropol road, which leads down past a stone quarry to the head of Sebastopol harbour.

“Here,” said Bruce, divesting himself of a pilot coat which covered his uniform, and flinging it to a corporal of Sappers, who was

looking on, "take care of this, and if I ever come back alive, I will give you something for your trouble. If I am killed you may keep it." And having thus spoken, the staff officer headed a portion of the — Division and advanced to the two-gun entrenchment.

And now comes the tug of war. The small English force takes post. Forward comes the overwhelming crowd of the enemy, choking up valleys and covering ridges, swarming, rushing, and roaring like a pack of hell-hounds from the bottomless pit. Vain are the rapid discharges of case, opening gap after gap in the huge expanding column. These are filled up again immediately by fresh masses of the enemy. The long grey coats, black belts, and wide forage caps with narrow band of red—all scarcely visible in the gloom—had rendered their forms dim and shadowy, but now they became distinctly perceptible, and every moment the hoarse yells increase in violence, the figures seem to dilate until, as a wave dashes upon a rock, this

legion of fiends flings itself in fury against the entrenchment.

But now Howard's voice rings loud and clear—a similar command is given along the line—a leaden storm flies into them—down go scores of the foremost; and while others march over the bodies of wounded and dying, again rings another discharge.

It was the first time St. Vincent had witnessed an engagement, and now the reality came upon him with something of the vague overpowering sensation of awe which a horrible dream inspires. This was not by any means wonderful, considering the numbers and wild aspect of the foe, the perils of a position menaced, and the circumstance of his having been suddenly roused from slumber in the gloom and drizzling rain of a November morning, to face the prospect, if not the certainty, of death.

An attack from the Russians (as is well known) had not been thought at all probable since the 26th. of October, when their recon-

noitring force had been sent pell-mell down the very ravine up which the enemy were now advancing. The feeling of consternation we may well believe was not confined to the novice.

The last volley cooled the frenzy of the barbarians, and they began to return fire, instead of attempting to force their way into the battery.

“By Heaven!” said Howard, “there is no sham here. An awful job for a first lesson. We must have support (blaze away there boys! Here we must stay—there’s nothing else for it). For God’s sake, St. Vincent, go and get us some more ammunition. Take some of those men with the stretchers.”

St. Vincent, who had been appointed adjutant on the previous evening, in place of an officer who had just gone to Scutari, saw the peril, and hastened to comply with the order of his chief. He “doubled” rapidly to the rear, with the party under his charge; and with some little difficulty, steered through the

fog for the windmill, where he was informed the ammunition was to be obtained. As he pressed along with anxious gesture, urging on the men, he encountered an ambulance wagon—the driver, a veteran with most war-like physiognomy, stared hard at him, and had St. Vincent not been otherwise engaged he might have recognised that hooked nose and florid complexion; for the man was no other than the person who had brought him the invitation to the pic-nic at Barren Wood, which his sudden departure had prevented him from accepting. As it was, each passed on without further illumination, for Ross, either because he was not quite certain of the identity, or from some other cause, did not venture to address the person for whom he had so often opened the gates of Clare Hall.

The ammunition procured, St. Vincent displayed more impatience than before, knowing as he did that, his regiment was in danger of being annihilated. For though he had taken the liberty (not altogether without

authority), to mention hastily to some of the staff, who were arriving on the ground, the perilous state of affairs in front; he had received unsatisfactory answers, "Nothing more could be done," according to one. "My good sir, there is an attack on the left and centre, and another on Balaclava," was the reply of another. A third, more obliging, "would mention the circumstance, but it had been already reported."

A little confused by the fog, and not altogether certain of the way back to the two-gun battery (though a lance-corporal, one of his party, seemed perfectly confident), our hero, himself lending a hand to the stretcher—which turned out a very useful vehicle for the conveyance of small-arm ammunition—hurried through rows of tents, heedless of storms of projectiles which impeded the progress of several field batteries, but left his party untouched.

"This way, sir—this way," said the guide, as he diverged to his left. They ran on. St.

Vincent could not recognise any of the objects, and a crowd of men of different regiments, alarmed by the tremendous din, was moving up on all sides to the rescue.

The guide hesitated. They went still further to the left, passing a party of rifles under charge of an officer, who was employing half a dozen of his men to load for him, while he rapidly picked off the enemy. Still nothing of the two-gun entrenchment—St. Vincent was in despair.

Suddenly he perceived the flash of guns within a short distance; the fog shifted a little, and he saw before him an English field battery in action. Fancying it was that in support of the "Loyal Britons," he uttered a cry of satisfaction and hurried on. What was his amazement to find it surrounded on the instant by the enemy! Terrible struggles were being made to get away the guns, but except in one or two instances, the maimed condition of the horses rendered the attempt hopeless; and St. Vincent saw the poor artillery men

defending themselves with desperate bravery against great odds.

Handpike, sponge, and rammer were wielded with the desperate energy inspired by an almost hopeless cause, but the savage and merciless enemy prevailing, the defenders were, one by one, shot or bayoneted.

At this moment a party of men came up with St. Vincent; he recognized the facings of the Loyal Britons, and the idea flashed across his mind that all but a remnant of his regiment had been surrounded, cut off, and destroyed. At the same time an artillery officer who had had his horse shot under him, appeared, pointing to the lost guns, and with imploring gesture rather than by words—for the noise of guns exploding and shells bursting, rendered inaudible what he said—entreated St. Vincent's assistance.

The appeal was well-timed. St. Vincent, wild at the thoughts of the catastrophe which he believed to have taken place, drew his sword, and calling on the men, rushed at the

guns, one of which was still desperately defended by a sergeant, who had snatched a firelock from one of his assailants.

With a loud cheer, the brave fellows went at them, just as the artillery officer brought up some of his own men, as well as some riflemen and others, in a flank attack.

Scared by this heroic effort, the enemy broke and fled, pursued and bayoneted by the victors, who thus performed a most distinguished service.*

It was now that St Vincent made the discovery, at once fortunate and unhappy, that he was far to the left of the two gun entrenchment. The party of "Loyal Britons," gave him to understand that they were on their way up from Peel's Battery.

Terribly grieved, he hastened to retrieve his error, offering a liberal reward to the man who should conduct him straight to the two-gun entrenchment. Tearing and bounding

* A letter informs us that the guns had been spiked with wooden pegs, so that they were not rendered unserviceable.

through the brushwood, heedless of the bullets which sung across his path, he was soon conducted safely to a point, where, to his relief, he saw the colors of the "Loyal Britons"—torn indeed by shot and bullet—but still standing firmly defiant of an overwhelming enemy.

Providentially his corps had not been left without ammunition—St. Vincent had conveyed the idea of the anticipated want to the commanding officer of another corps, who had wisely sent a supply. But the bayonet was now substituted for an expenditure of ball cartridge; for the Russians, intoxicated with raki and fanaticism, and forced on by the dense masses behind, surrounded the battery, and made their way into it, pushing through the embrasures, climbing the parapet, and storming the flanks. But, with superhuman effort, these were repelled as fast as they came. though it was evident the —— Division could not hold out much longer.

"Bravo! the ——th and the ——th! Well done, the Loyal Britons! by G——, this is

glorious!" said the bold brigadier, who galloping forward, at intervals, appeared now here, now there, right in the middle of the combat, waving his hat, and shouting like a madman. Again he calls out—"give them a volley—give them a volley, there on the flanks. Hurrah! There's music for you, there's music, I say!"

He was in his element. Some men are salamanders, and never so brisk as when in the hottest of fire. Like voltaic batteries, such spirits have force to communicate an electric spark, which will blaze through a host, vivifying an expiring struggle, and changing defeat into victory.

Fast and furious grew the strife in and around the two-gun battery, and St. Vincent was now in the thick of it. More ammunition had been distributed, but, as we said, the combat had become too close, and too deadly, to handle the cartridge; though the missiles of the enemy still flew in amongst the English. The "Loyal Britons" were suffering severely.

Officer, non-commissioned officer, and private, participated in the butcher-like task of thrusting their foes through and through, as the latter, pressing against them with deadly incubus, came on and on in never-ending waves. More than one officer was mortally wounded. Hope escaped with a flesh wound, and three bayonet thrusts through his clothes. Winslow's temple was grazed by a musket-ball. St. Vincent's cap was knocked off by a fragment of a shell; while, all unknown to him, blood was trickling down his side from a wound received at the rescue of the guns. Howard is as yet untouched, but if the Loyal Britons are not presently relieved, there will be few of them left to tell in England the gloomy horrors of Inkermann morning.

One spectator seemed particularly interested in this sanguinary struggle. The ambulance waggon which had passed St. Vincent a short time previously, had drawn up on the ridge in rear of the two-gun intrenchment, and Ross watched in great excitement the ebb and flow

of the tide of war. At length he could not control his emotion. He looked round to see if authority might interpose, and finding no one, he exclaimed: "The Deil and the Dr. thegither may drive this auld b——h of a cairt. Wi' brune Bess in my hand a'll do mair gude than glowrin here like a stickit pig." And with this he flung himself out of the harness saddle, threw away his whip and tore off his leggings; and snatching up the carbine and pouch-belt of a deceased soldier, ran into the middle of the fight.

But meantime the Guards were advancing with noble bearing to the crest of the ridge, headed by their right Royal chief. The black bearskin above, and the oblique and horizontal streaks of white across their dark front, added to the regularity of their appearance; while the well-timed step, and the tall stature of the men made a grand show of order and discipline. But even here death and fate were busy. The iron storm was hurling to the earth the strong man "in his strength";

but fast as a guardsman fell, the ranks closed in, and thus the noble fellows, though losing a comrade at every step, went proudly and fearlessly on.

They arrived at the crest of the hill just as the Loyal Britons, something diminished in number, had been forced to retire step by step, leaving the two-gun battery in possession of the enemy. Into this work the grey-coated Russians were now swarming on all sides.

“They must come out of it!” said the Duke of Cambridge. Then arose a cheer heard above the din of battle. Down went the bayonets of Her Majesty’s Guards. Descending the incline at a rapid pace, they charged the enemy, and with force irresistible drove them through the embrasures and over the parapet flank and front, and rolled back the living waves that roared and surged upon that fatal hill.

Fatal hill indeed! sad altar of a cursed ambition; how did the hot blood of England spout upon the cold slopes of that wild spot!

CHAPTER VIII.

Fate soon turned the tide,
Foes for quarter calling;
Vanquish'd Russia sighed,
To see her Eagles falling.

Song, by Dr. ROGERS.

It is strange how a wayward fate, or rather how an over-ruling Providence, baffles, at times, the most ingenious designs of human invention; mocking the counsels of craftiness, and turning wisdom into folly. This marvel is nowhere more conspicuous than in war, where even the most egregious blunders have sometimes been crowned with success.

The Crimean Campaign was eminently remarkable for its singular vicissitudes, and unexpected results.

The Gunpowder Plot of 1854, was well conceived, and had it been as well carried out, it is far from improbable that, "the terrible calamity," promised by Menschikoff, would have overtaken the allies.

However laudable it may be to trace the protecting hand of Providence in the affairs of nations, it becomes presumption when we attempt to interpret disaster, as the language of Divine displeasure

Several causes have been assigned for the failure of the Russian attack. The error committed by Soimonoff in encroaching on the space occupied by Pauloff's column, instead of extending to his own right, is that most frequently put forward. But Soimonoff's was not the only blunder. The feint at Balaclava was too feebly made to effect a real diversion. Had it been properly executed, important results might have been obtained. The extreme right of the Balaclava lines, was poorly defended, and an enemy advancing, with guns, along the mountain ridge from Baidar, would, in a

spirited attack, not only have diverted attention from other points, but have added, at very small risk, the infliction of real mischief.

Possibly the souvenirs of the 25th. of October, the prospect of flight, and the certainty of rapid pursuit on the part of the English, materially influenced Russian tactics in this quarter.

We may also conclude, that the obscurity of the morning occasioned uncertainty and confusion to the attacking force, as well as to the defenders.

To return to the battle-field. The "Loyal Britons," as we have said, fell back, as the Brigade of Guards advanced, and it was now the turn of the former to appear as spectators of the bloody drama, in which they had recently been the principal performers.

The particulars of the struggle are well known. The Fusiliers, Grenadiers, and Coldstreams, received the now fearfully augmented masses of the enemy, with the desperate determination of men who cannot expect aid,

and hope for no quarter. Soimonoff's column was added to Pauloff's. Thousands came on, where thousands had come before, to fall in scores, and hundreds, and to be piled in ghastly heaps—victims of the smashing ball, or the sharp, shining, deadly bayonet. The spectacle resembled the slaughter of cattle, as the Guards, resisting the pressure of their enemies, with off-repeated frantic thrust, impaled six or seven, in almost as many seconds.

The crash of bursting shell, the vindictive rush of shot, the ping and whistle of bullets, shouts, screams, yells of triumph, and roars of pain, filled up the brimming horrors of this scene of butchery.

How a thousand Guardsman—beating down their enemies with the butt end of their firelocks, and hurling stones, when ammunition failed—kept back the murderous horde which if once successful, might have swept the armies of England and France from the plateau, we need not here relate. Their heroic acts have been graven on tablets more durable than

brass or marble—even on the hearts of their countrymen; and as long as the world shall last, the tongue of Fame shall reveal to each new-born generation, the marvels of that bloody morning.

The ordeal was past. Surrounded, outnumbered, but covered with glory, the diminished Brigade charged up the hill, and once more the Russians swarmed upon the contested patch of ground.

In their turn, the force which had been relieved, rushed again to the unequal combat, and the honor of England's Standard, perhaps the freedom of Europe, hangs upon the turn of the scale. As the current of a river battles against the advancing tide of the ocean, so along the whole field of Inkermann, the thin British line resists an overwhelming multitude. Let the defenders waver—let the thin line break—and who shall estimate the portentousness of the result! Shall a siege raised, and an army destroyed, sum up the evils to come? or shall these be but

the precursors of a renewed deluge of Goths sweeping down from the North, to efface civilization, and obliterate art, science, and learning?

The suspense of that awful moment thrilled through many a loyal heart; but by whom could it have been more deeply felt, than by the veteran general whose title calls up the vision of a proud feudal castle, sinking in ruins, with the torn royal standard still floating above it?

That veteran had ridden by the side of England's greatest military chief on an ever-memorable day—had witnessed the deadly strife of Hougoumont—had seen the armed might of a despot broken, crushed, and destroyed. From the crest of Inkermann ridge he now watches a combat not less terrible and desperate. By those well-known features—those grey locks—that missing arm, announcing the companion of Wellington and a Waterloo hero, we recognise the noble Commander of the British army in the East, who,

tenderly solicitous for the safety of others, is nevertheless careless of his own, and sits erect and immoveable on his charger, while the ground on every side is ploughed by roaring projectiles.

The mists had now been lifted from the deep valley of the Tchernaya, and were slowly rolling off the plateau. Soon the wild landscape, fitting scene of strife so terrific, could be plainly viewed from the crest of the ridge above the encampment of the — Division.

To the eastward, a semicircle of azure hills bounded the distance, and above the rest stood the peaked form of Tchatir Dagh. The blue Tchernaya meandered silently through the broad valley, with here and there a few alders dotting its banks, or the pools which the overflowing current had formed. Directly across the deep chasm, which something resembled the profound ditch of a mammoth fortress, rose the white, rocky counterscarp, crowned and backed by a forest of low trees. Upon the brink of the lofty precipice glimmered the

dilapidated walls, which, together with a pale grey tower, resembling the circular keep of a Norman castle, bear the title of "The ruins of Inkermann."

A rock chapel, with glazed windows, peering from the face of this cliff, could be described; and further to the right hand, the spectator might note tier above tier of those singular caves, which, if not Cimmerian, might very well represent the obscure haunts of a dark superstition. Strange and lonely as was the prospect of barren hill and vale, stunted forest, pale rock, and crumbling unchronicled remains of antiquity—how tame was it when compared with the other half of the panorama, where hosts confronted one another with deadly purpose, and with all the awful accompaniments of a strife where empires are at stake!

Behind the enormous struggling crowd, the copse-covered hills shut out the view of the white city; but on the not very distant crest of those eminences, the long and deadly array

of destructive engines could now be dimly seen through the smoke, as with flash and roar they hurled forth desolation to the English over the heads of the attacking force. The full weight of their deadly missiles was directed against the field batteries of the English, which, extended in a line on the crest of the ridge, were replying with untiring energy, under all the serious disadvantages consequent upon paucity of numbers, and inferiority of metal. Dreadful was the havoc! Horses horribly mangled and mutilated—whole teams even, blown to pieces—guns disabled, limber-boxes smashed and their contents scattered, wheels with their spokes knocked out, carriages splintered and broken in fragments, and corpses strewing the ground; such was the spectacle that was presented. But in spite of all, the noble gunners maintained their posts, though their power was almost annihilated. Disasters seemed gathering on all sides. The Russians were pressing on. Vainly Cathcart tried to effect a diversion; his flank was turned, and his

weak force, meeting the fate intended for the enemy, was surrounded, cut off and destroyed, while the gallant leader himself paid the penalty of his daring.

Near the old contested spot, the fight rages as fiercely as ever, and, among the foremost, that noble phalanx, which withstood the first rush of the enemy, now shares what appears to be a closing struggle.

But, ah! how sadly thinned are those devoted ranks! Could gentle ones in England see their beloved friends pressing forward into the cruel jaws of death, or falling in mortal agony upon the disputed ground, how would they call to Heaven for aid, or rend the air with shrieks of anguish. For an instant such ideas vividly presented themselves to the mind of the person who had been so suddenly thrown into the midst of the awful realities of war.

As he had rushed into the fray his thoughts flitted for an instant to other scenes. He remembered some to whom he had bid a fond

adieu. He seemed to see two faces lighted with the sweet expression of sincere regard, which they had worn at the last moment. One was that of his only sister, the other was her whom he had vainly hoped to call by a yet more tender name. A sigh he gave—a prayer he prayed—and then committing himself to the keeping of the Giver of all Victory, nerved heart and arm for the dangerous and deadly task before him.

Like Leonidas at the head of a patriot band, so Howard stood at bay in the midst of his companions in arms, while Inkermann seemed turning into another Thermopylæ. Beside him St. Vincent—classic in form and face, and with bearing worthy of the renowned Three Hundred—animates the desperate struggle as if determined, like the Grecian hero, “to return with his shield or on it.” Nor less chivalrous is the attitude of other comrades; and if the pale and bleeding combatants fall back, yielding to the sheer weight of the enemy’s masses, it is only to rally and rush forward again.

But Fate seems about to blur the bright page of England's glory, and History to chronicle a defeat. The proud banner of England, which from the far times of the Crusades has flaunted in victory's van, now shakes as if about to fall.

Something of triumph is mingling in the hoarse cry of the foe. They press forward to the crest of the ridge, which, if once gained the day will be decided, for who will set bounds to that vast surging tide, or say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further!"

That tide rolled onward, and a cry arose of "All is lost!"

"Never!" said the lion-hearted Howard, "so long as we have weapons in our hands!"

A moment he raised his cap above his head, and, turning his glowing face towards the resolute band around him, shouted in a clear, loud tone:

"FOR OLD ENGLAND, AND FOR THE QUEEN—
CHARGE!"

The sword of the gallant leader flashed in the air; with a cheer, his men obeyed the call. They flew against the mass before them, and plunged into the raging current.

The Russians closed in, and—as a doomed ship, battling against a tempestuous sea, vanishes in foam and darkness amidst the roar of elements—so that Chivalrous phalanx disappeared!

At this moment there resounded a grand burst of applause; peal after peal was heard above the din of battle. It was the welcome to Bosquet, who came to the assistance of the wearied English. Soon afterwards, Dickson's 18-pounders opened fire. The wild hosts of the Czar retreated in disorder, and History inscribed upon the long Roll of England's Victories the terrible name of INKERMANN!

CHAPTER IX.

Peace be with the brave
In their cold bed lying
By the Euxine wave—
Honor never dying!

SONG BY DR. ROGERS.

THE yellow moon rose behind the dusky ruins of Inkermann, and touched with pale gold the stream which calmly flowed down the valley of the Tchernaya, and through the dark chasm, on its way to the sea. Her great solemn face was turned full upon the field, which lately resounded with the clang and roar of battle, and shook to the rushing tread of furious battalions; but which now only displayed a ghastly spectacle of suffering and death.

Near the two-gun entrenchment the dead

and wounded of three nations lay in heaps upon heaps. Amidst swords, firelocks, accoutrements, bear-skins of Guardsmen, and every variety of uniform—the pale corpse and the restless feverish children of pain, were intermingled, and as it were, woven together in dreadful variety.

The ghostly light brought some figures prominently into relief, while others were left in shadow. Gasping sighs, sobs, moans, wild shrieks, and mad laughter were the melancholy sounds which saluted the ear.

Oh, Despot—behold thy work! Thy human brethren mangled and dead—thy Maker's image defaced—behold, I say, thy work—and envy the meanest serf in thy vast spreading empire, whose hands are free from the blood of his fellows; who, far removed from scenes of grandeur, knows neither the splendid dreams of ambition which haunt the minds of the great, nor the sombre desolation in which they often vanish amidst the tears of the widow and the fatherless.

Say, wouldst thou learn, relentless autocrat,
how glow the hearts of thy vassals with holy
zeal for a sacred cause ?

Mark well those three sorely wounded men,
crouching round yon flickering fire in the
shadow of the parapet, where human wreck
lies thickest. They represent three nations;
but see how with the rude charity of a rough
calling, each plays the good Samaritan—how
they share together the morsel of food and
the scanty draught, scarce sufficient to slake
the feverish thirst of one. Softened by the
instinct of a common misery, what care they
for the quarrels of Emperors? Do they
not rather wonder why, a few hours before,
they contended in fierce rage thirsting for each
other's blood ?

Paler rose the moon—higher and higher
above the dark ruins of Inkermann, and each
minute a wounded warrior finished the last
painful night of his earthly warfare; and
from the myriad white tents which specked
the wide plateau, many were absent for whom

tidings were looked for in vain. The lantern's red spark moving hither and thither like an *ignis fatuus*, amongst the dying and dead, shews that the busy search is still continued late into the night.

Sad is the camp of the Loyal Britons. In that last heroic effort many a bold cheery spirit was quenched. St. Vincent had defended the body of a friend till weak with loss of blood he had fallen by his side.

An aged father shall weep an only son, the heir of his wide estate and the last of his line; for with hair matted with blood, and with chill face turned towards the stars, lies the noble form of the gallant Howard; and though the benumbed hand still firmly grasps his broken sword—never more shall the leader of the Loyal Britons draw blade for England's rights, or charge at the head of his men.

CHAPTER X.

Heap on more wood—the wind is chill,
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.

SCOTT.

LEAVING for awhile the vicinity of the beleaguered city, let us wing our course towards the little island so deeply interested in the struggle before the walls of Sebastopol. Once more we see an old hall rising upon a rocky eminence, but a leafless forest now sighs to the winter blast. Other changes have taken place at Clare Hall, Sir Richard has been complaining latterly of his health, and Alice is by no means so gay and light-hearted as for-

merly. The kind-hearted and amiable Lady De Clare is, in consequence, rendered a little anxious. Day after day our heroine has watched the arrival of the post-bag, in expectation of seeing the long-looked for handwriting of St. Vincent, but all in vain. The newspaper report of his having been wounded at the battle of Inkermann, is the only intelligence she has had, and ere this she has begun to feel the bitter truth of the proverb, which says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

Lady De Clare had ceased to speak much on the subject, and Sir Richard cannot hear St. Vincent's name mentioned without impatience. Shortly after our hero's departure for the Crimea Lady De Clare proposed writing to him, but Sir Richard would not allow of such a thing being done, and gave peremptory orders that the subject should be dropped altogether. It was no consolation to Alice to observe that both her father and mother were indisposed to excuse the behaviour of St. Vin-

cent. This faithful girl, however, could not bring herself to believe that her lover had intentionally neglected her, and she accordingly explained his silence in various ways, and as we have said, looked forward daily to a full elucidation of the mystery from her lover himself, though it appeared to be hoping against hope. Her last resource was to lay the blame upon the post, and to persist in the idea that St. Vincent must have left for the Crimea on the day of the pic-nic to Barren Wood. The fact of his having taken the trouble to ride out to Clare Hall on that occasion, instead of writing was, she thought conclusive. In fact, she determined that she would never give him up let the world say what it liked. She knew he loved her, and that was sufficient.

Such being her determination, it will be readily believed that the news of her young hero having been wounded on the bloody heights of Inkermann, caused her some tears, not less bitter because they were shed in secret, and because she was denied the privi-

lege of sending him even a few words of sympathy.

Christmas—usually a season of cheerful hospitality and merry-making at Clare Hall—found the Baronet's family unable to enter into its festivities with the customary spirit.

A change had come over Sir Richard, he had grown fretful and more easily excited, and somehow or other he found himself exposed to more frequent annoyance on all sides.

He began to regret the loss of Ross, who had left the place at his own request, and enlisted in the Ambulance Corps—as the reader is aware—the day following his dispute with Constantine Broadway; and the Baronet had got rid of two worthless successors without finding much amelioration in a third.

Poachers made their way into his preserves, and though Sir Richard, disturbed from his slumber by the reports of their fowling pieces, had himself made more than one nocturnal excursion through his covers, it was always with-

out success. Affected probably by a complication of harassing circumstances, his health began to be impaired, and his failing appetite and an inability to sleep at night told upon appearance.

Of late years he had led a very secluded life. The Earl of Steeplechase was the only neighbour within a reasonable distance, and between that nobleman and the Baronet we have already seen there existed but little of the "entente cordiale."

Now that the Broadways had taken up their abode at Brighton, there was no other family within fifteen miles, with whom our friends were at all intimate. Since the departure of St. Vincent, therefore, Sir Richard was more than ever dependant upon his studies for amusement, and he thus neglected out-of-door exercise and air at a time when both were particularly necessary.

Christmas approached with evergreens for the church, and mistletoe for the hall.

Five or six relatives of Lady De Clare were

collected under her roof, making up a family party, in which Falkland appeared as the only surviving, though very distant connexion on the Baronet's side of the house. Mr. Constantine Broadway, who had been asked to dinner on a certain evening, had craved permission to bring with him a distinguished Savant, by name Herr Von Augenblick, who commonly bore the title of Count, though he professed to hold a higher rank in his own country.

Whether some notion as to the duty of being merry on that particular occasion was generally entertained by the party or not, we cannot pretend to say ; but it is incontestibly true that the Baronet and his wife and daughter succeeded to a certain extent in an attempt to look as cheerful as their guests, as they sat down to dinner on Christmas eve. As there were no very distinguishing characteristics observable in Lady De Clare's relations, we shall say a few words concerning Herr Von Augenblick, who, on being introduced, an-

nounced to the Baronet that in Germany he bore the title of "Graf."

The Count (we choose to designate him by that appellation) was exceedingly tall and dark; his nose was unmistakably aquiline; and though his complexion had that smoke-dried appearance not uncommon among his countrymen, he might have been good looking, had he not borne the distinguishing characteristic of a cyclops. Report said that Herr Augenblick had in his youth been much addicted to gambling, and a jest was current that he had, in a game of hazard, "lost one eye," and also "played for the other."

Sir Richard, glad to get a little conversation with a foreigner in a language to which he was particularly partial, was pleased to find the Count exceedingly intelligent and amusing. Almost the first act of Herr Augenblick was to produce from his pocket the last number of the "Kladderadatch,"* and

* It is scarcely necessary to explain that this Journal is of a facetious character.

to call Sir Richard's attention to a caricature of an English statesman, who was represented as transformed into a stag pursued by (political) dogs, the identity being determined by the inscription of, "Der Verdammt Roebuck !"

The Count had travelled much, and during dinner entertained the company with many extraordinary stories, which lost nothing by his broken English. When the ladies had quitted the room, the Count displayed great interest in scrutinising the family portraits, all of which he declared were "wunderschön." Nothing would content him short of a distinct history of every person represented.

"All that side," observed the Baronet, pointing to a row of crusaders and knightly figures of a subsequent period, "are fictitious, they are the work of my grandfather, and Heaven only knows where he collected all the data! for, beyond what is to be found in monumental brass and sepulchral effigy, or in an occasional illuminated M.S., there is not

much to guide a man in such a task. Such as they are, however, you see them with the trifling addition of a wash of brown varnish, to give them an air of antiquity.

“That’s Richard Earl of Striguil, the Conqueror of Ireland; I believe that coat of mail to be of the cut and fashion of the period. (Our ancestors seem to have been as ridiculous as ourselves in the matter of changing frequently the style of their costume). The Earl of Striguil or Chepestow (which means market town) is buried in Dublin, at Christ Church Cathedral. He was one of the most successful robbers of his day. (I don’t mind saying that, though I bear his identical name). He landed in Ireland on Bartholomew’s Eve, afterwards memorable enough elsewhere. That is a still more ambiguous personage. I forget his name though—the legend talks of him as a person ‘who receiving a severe blow on the head, lived a long while distracted.’ I think if I mistake not he was one of the Earls of Brion, in Nor-

mandy. That fellow there, whose name was Roger, refused to do homage to Thomas à Becket, for the Castle of Tonbridge, in Kent, and I think he was perfectly right. The next is the first Earl of Hertford. These lords of Clare were afterwards called Earls of Hertford and Gloucester. This man married Alice, sister of the second Earl of Chester. Here is Gilbert or Gislebert, first Earl of Pembroke, and father of Strongbow. In the corner is Robert Fitzwalter, a 'marshal of the army of God and Holy Church,' one of the barons who distinguished themselves at Runnymede. That's Sir Godfrey (he was the second Baronet—the last Earl of Gloucester was killed at Bannockburn) Sir Godfrey fell at the battle of Marston Moor after the Puritan rascals had turned him out of house and home—you see it is in the manner of Vandyke. Lady Amicia comes next—reign of William III., by Sir Godfrey Kneller. I need not trouble you with any of the rest—What's that one?—Oh! he goes by the name of Mas-

ter Walter. Hogarth painted the picture, though I cannot see the line of beauty in it. This gentleman, who went out in '45, was an ancestor of my grand-mother, he was a swaggering fellow, and the greatest liar of his time (that's my opinion of him). He trumped up a story about a red cloak, which— (here the Baronet was interrupted by a question from the Count concerning the next picture) That, Sir, is my unfortunate elder brother who died in America—Shall we join the ladies?"

The Count might possibly have wished to ask some other questions, but he perceived that the Baronet was not inclined to answer them. He therefore submitted to be led into the drawing-room. After tea the whole party descended into the servant's hall, where amidst decorations of holly and mistletoe, Sir Richard's not very numerous tenantry were assembled according to custom immemorial.

The yule log was not wanting, and a huge

wood fire roared in the ample fire-place causing the scanty illumination to pale before the ruddy blaze, and throwing a warm tint on the jovial faces which welcomed with smiles the approach of the Baronet, his wife, and daughter, who were accompanied by the Vicar and the guests. The Baronet wished them all "a merry Christmas," and drank their healths in a glass of wine, presented in due form by the housekeeper. It is needless to say, that the first remarks were received with loud cheers, in which the children joined, (for of olive branches there were plenty) while the wives and daughters waved white pocket-handkerchiefs. A poetical address was then read by the old schoolmaster of the parish (who put on his spectacles for the purpose). This was also loudly applauded, and while two or three fiddles began to tune up for a country dance, and partners repaired to their places—the children at the bottom, and the more advanced in years at the top—the schoolmaster's wife, a venerable dame, ap-

proached and complimented the Baronet upon his appearance :

“I heard you was ill, Sir Richard, you’ll excuse me for looking at you so close ; you know, Sir, (she put her head almost into his face) for my eyes are not as good as they was, you see, Sir. Now that I observe you carefully, I think you’re looking very well, Sir.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Wheatfield, I am happy to be able to say the same with regard to yourself.”

“Did you speak, Sir?” said the old lady with her hand to her ear, and again thrusting her head forward.

“I am—glad—to—see—you—so—young!” shouted the Baronet, while Mrs. Wheatfield preserved her attitude of attention. The old lady made a bow of grateful comprehension.

“We are a very hearty old couple, Sir Richard—that is, my husband and I, thank God. And we’re much obliged to you and the ladies for all you’ve done for us. And as

to Mr. Falkland, Sir Richard, he is the best man that ever lived—I think so. Did you speak, Sir?" (the same movement of the head and hand again), "Oh! I beg your pardon, Sir Richard, I thought you did, Sir."

Mrs. Wheatfield now turned to the Baronet's wife and daughter, who had a word for everybody as they went along.

It was a subject of remark that on rare occasions the vicar's usual expression of quiet resignation was exchanged for a more animated cast of thought. On the present evening, while looking around the well-known faces of a portion of his little flock, all beaming with cheerful hilarity, his liveliest sympathies were excited. There was more than one honest heart there which felt a glow of pleasure in observing how the good vicar's countenance was lighted up.

After remaining some little time, the Baronet and his party, leaving the people in the servant's hall to enjoy themselves, returned to the drawing-room; when the Count, who

had lately been in America, made everybody laugh heartily by giving a detailed account of the "Rochester Knockings," with a graphic description of the personal appearance of Mrs. Fish and the Misses Fox (the talented originators). The Count had heard the spirit rappings, and a friend of his had not only been nearly overturned by a blow from the table, which sprang against him—while he was expressing disbelief in the reality of the moving power—but also had his hair spiritually pulled by an invisible hand.

By the time these relations had been concluded the Baronet had sunk to sleep, and Constantine had prevailed on Miss De Clare to open the piano. Mr. Constantine's manner had recently led Alice to believe that she had discovered, where she had not expected it, a friend to one absent in the Crimea. The Agent spoke of St. Vincent as of one who ought to be esteemed, and had, a day or two previously, casually remarked to our heroine that he expected shortly to hear

from a person with whom he had once very nearly had a foolish quarrel. By such artful insinuations the poor girl was completely imposed upon, and began to regard with some degree of friendly feeling the real author of her distresses. She felt certain that Constantine had no idea of the state of affairs between herself and St. Vincent, partly because she thought he must be ignorant of the matter, and partly because he appeared to be so. All these circumstances considered, she was found not to be averse to holding an occasional *tête-à-tête* with a man whom, had she known better, would have become a detestable object in her eyes.

And what was Constantine's object in proposing a move to the piano? Is Constantine also among the followers of Timotheus? So it appeared, for he asked Miss De Clare to have the goodness to accompany him in a German version of the "Chemin du Paradis" which the Count had brought. Alice played the prelude.

"Now, Mr. Broadway—Oh, you were not ready, shall I begin again?"

This time Constantine emitted a sound, but not as it was written in the music before him, "You havn't got the note yet," said Alice smiling.

The Agent made another attempt and the accompaniment continued. When it was concluded he asked what she thought of his performance.

"Indeed, I am sorry to tell you," said Alice, almost laughing, "that there was not one note of it in tune."

"I havn't learnt it yet," said the Agent, twitching away the song and laying it down with an air of vexation, which being instantly repressed, Miss De Clare failed in detecting.

"Now will you be so good as to favor us with an Irish melody?" asked Constantine, placing the book before her, and opening it at the commencement.

"Which will you have?" said Alice.

"Oh, any; the first—yes," he added look-

ing over the lines, "this is just as pretty as any of them, I believe."

Thus urged Alice begun to sing "Go where glory waits thee."

In spite of an effort to overcome the difficulty, Miss De Clare was conscious that her voice was not as steady as she could have wished. So she omitted the second verse, and began the third in a very touching way, for her voice was remarkably sweet, and her taste perfect.

When around thee dying,
Autumn's leaves are lying—
Oh, then remember me!
And at night when gazing
On the gay hearth blazing—
Oh, still remember me!
Then should music, stealing
All the soul of feeling,
To thy heart appealing,
Draw one tear from thee—
Then, let memory bring thee
Strains I *used* to sing thee—

Mr. Constantine had moved away. We shall not attempt to divine his thoughts; but Alice could no longer sustain the song, which

seemed to call up a reminiscence of former days. Thoughts crowded thick upon her; and while she mechanically played some instrumental piece of music, tears from her eyes fell noiselessly and fast.

CHAPTER XI.

Au milieu de tant de passions qui nous agitent, notre raison se trouble et s'obscurcit.

ST. PIERRE.

WE were for a time puzzled to account for the re-appearance of our friend Rogers, who, it may be remembered, was carried off by Cossacks at Balaklava, as his name appears in letters shortly after Inkermann. We began first to doubt the authority of Paul Bold, to whose correspondence we are principally indebted for the story of the Doctor's capture. It appears, however, that Inkermann, which took away many, restored one. A letter, which escaped our editorial research, informs

us that Rogers, though a prisoner, had been sent on to the field with the Ekatherinenbergs, for the purpose of attending to their wounded; medical officers being scarce in Sebastopol. The Ekatherinenbergs commenced to shoot their officers, and the Doctor began to conclude he would be safer on the other side of the field. Selecting a favourable opportunity for flight, he broke from his escort, and ran into the arms of his companions, who seeing him in a half-Russian costume, were upon the point of shooting the invader, but fortunately, ere too late, discovered him to be a friend.

To the care of Rogers St. Vincent was confided. Our hero had been sent down to Balaklava after the battle of the 5th; and as soon as his state permitted, the friendly doctor had him transported to the bracing climate of the hills above. Here he would receive more attention than the over-taxed energies of the medical department could elsewhere afford to bestow.

His wounds proved severe, but not dangerous; yet he was told that nearly six weeks must elapse, ere he would be able to resume any active duty. St. Vincent suffered in mind as well as in body—he was deeply affected by the loss of his old comrade. It was the first depressing thought of the morning, and the sad subject of contemplation during the night watches, and he who possessed few ties of blood relationship, mourned as a lost brother, the noble and gallant fellow who filled a soldier's grave upon the cold heights of Inkermann. But though the loss of a dear friend was sufficient to account for the depression of his spirits there were other circumstances which helped to increase it. We have already alluded to a letter of a painful character, received about the time of his arrival in the Crimea, and we may as well announce that it was couched in terms which most effectually extinguished every ray of hope in the lover's breast. Hence it was, no doubt, that a feeling of more intense dreariness

seemed to oppress him. When an over-ruling passion is rudely thwarted, the shock is ever violent. Landscapes suddenly robbed of sunshine, and trees of verdure, do not offer examples of transition more strange than those which are experienced by sensitive and imaginative persons, when they view the destruction of an ardent aspiration, or long-cherished hope.

Morbid sentiment and habitual melancholy were, indeed, quite foreign to St. Vincent's nature; but mental depression is the frequent companion of physical debility.

Time the great physician, however, effects wonderful cures. Happy is the arrangement that the most acute distress does not keep its keen edge for ever. Days wore on, and in mind and body St. Vincent suffered less, and though life appeared to him under a faded aspect, he struggled manfully to shake off the lethargy of sorrow, and to wrestle with a destiny which seemed to throw shadow after shadow upon his path.

The patient's life was imperilled by the great storm, on the 16th. of November. Strange sounds from the sea had warned the dwellers on the high peak, that something unusual was about to occur ; but, beyond holding on to the gyes and tent cords, little could be done to ward off impending calamity.

Ere they could lower the tents, half were blown sheer away, and the rest followed. Anywhere else the spectacle would have been considered ludicrous, to observe the variety of articles of male attire, and every species of property which took to flight one after the other ; but to those, who were now left to the mercy of an inclement sky it was far from furnishing matter for jest.

The sea from this elevation presented an appalling spectacle, and, though none were bold enough to venture a glance from the brink of the precipice, they were not altogether ignorant of the frightful disasters which took place below ; where noble ships, breaking their last cable, were driven furiously to des-

truction—some surging forward, bow foremost, others lifted broadside against the face of the cliff, collapsing as if they had been paste-board, and shivering into a thousand fragments, while the cries of the lost were drowned in the overwhelming roar and thunder of the frantic waves.

So fearful was the time, that it almost seemed as if the final day of retribution had arrived. To some of the wounded, it proved scarcely less; and throughout the disastrous winter—so replete with misery and misfortune of one kind and the other—this day was considered as the Hegira, from which the sad calendar began to date.

Beside the smouldering embers of a feeble fire, our friends on the high peak sat crouching, and neither songs nor laughter enlivened the long dark hours. So passed that night on the Balaclava heights; and on the plateau things were no better.

And now began the dismal reign of mud and starvation; and during its most

gloomy period, St. Vincent, though not quite recovered from the effects of his wounds, buckled on his sword once more, and took share of his companions' toils. Week after week saw him performing the same duties—in hunger and cold—amid rain and snow, while his men were daily vanishing into hospital, or finding a grave upon that inhospitable soil.

'Twere needless to linger over the details of that sad chapter of the history of the Crimean Campaign : suffice it to say, that St. Vincent, like others, often passed forty-eight hours in the trenches amid the driving snow, or drenching rain—returning, benumbed with cold, weak with hunger, and exhausted by fatigue, to such repose as the muddy floor of his tent afforded ; but that not a word of murmur escaped his lips, and that, throughout that trying period he displayed a degree of fortitude which, no doubt, was equalled, though it could not have been surpassed.

Winslow and St. Vincent during this time

were often together. The former having gathered something of the state of St. Vincent's affairs, took a lively interest in them. Suspecting that St. Vincent's correspondence had been intercepted, he proposed a new channel of communication. St. Vincent, though at first very much indisposed to adopt Winslow's idea,—at length yielded to his friend's suggestion, and wrote a letter, which Winslow despatched through his own friends, who resided in a neighbouring county.

Shortly after this, certain reports through various channels, reached St. Vincent of a great intimacy between Miss De Clare and Lord Thornhill, and he had begun to think, that all things considered, his interests at Clare Hall were in a very hopeless state.

Amid the toils and dangers of a siege like that of Sebastopol, sentimental thoughts of all kinds are sadly out of place; and St. Vincent's were anything but of a pleasurable character. It is hard, however, to divert an old current of thought, which like that of a river is prone to

flow in its accustomed channel. It was in one of his less hopeful moments when suffering from a wound, which had never ceased to trouble him at intervals—and which, indeed, had never properly healed—that he began to peruse a M.S., the gift of Miss De Clare.

If our friends have forgotten the title, they will find it heading the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

RED MANTLE.

And jump'd and muttered—Lost! lost! lost!

LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

MASTER WALTER had followed the hounds till his steed began to fail. An unusually long run had exhausted the trusty animal, and the rider, afraid that he would be unable to reach home, began to cast his eyes about in search of some place to pass the night.

A dense fog had begun to creep over the ground, and the twilight of a November evening warned him that there was not much time to be lost. He was wholly unacquainted

with the part of the country in which he found himself, and had been for a considerable time separated from the rest of the hunt—which had more than an hour ago rattled on in the distance—and the cry of the dogs and the shouts of the riders were no longer to be heard. It was then with a feeling of satisfaction that he descried, at some three hundred paces before him, a light glimmering through the fog. The animal he bestrode—with that ready instinct which divined a comfortable stall and prospective feed—pricked up his ears that for the last mile had flapped nerveless and limp about his head, and showed signs of returning animation.

The evening was raw, the damp penetrating, and the traveller hungry, so he thought it no harm to apply the spur pretty sharply to “Sobieski”—such was the name which the jaded Bucephalus rejoiced in. An increase of pace, verging on the canter, was the result. Now floundering through quagmire, now brushing through broom and heather, Master

Walter crossed the remaining portion of the heath (for it was such that he had been traversing), and passing on through a wide stone gateway, of which the pillars only remained, made straight for the light.

We would say that he drew bridle before the door of a small old-fashioned mansion, but that as Sobieski was only too glad to stop of his own accord, such a statement would not be in strict accordance with the truth. Be that as it may, it appeared that both steed and rider were destined to remain some time in suspense, as, notwithstanding repeated applications of the butt end of a heavy riding whip, no notice whatever was taken of the benighted traveller.

An old sign creaked unpleasantly above Master Walter's head, and a dismal rustling was caused by the wind agitating the leaves of the two tall poplars, which straggling up against the sky seemed like dark spectres keeping guard over the lonely habitation.

In answer to a last desperate effort at arous-

ing the inhabitants, a gruff voice was heard to exclaim :

“ Who’s there, and what do you want ?”

“ A gentleman demanding shelter and food, for which he is willing to pay,” said Master Walter.

“ How am I to know if you are what you represent ?”

“ Open the door and see,” was Master Walter’s prompt reply.

A muttering sound as of persons in consultation preceded the withdrawal of numerous bolts, and at length the door was partially opened, and the light of an oil lamp was thrown on the face of the visitor. A careful inspection seemed to increase the confidence of the man who held the lamp, shading himself as much as possible, while he flashed upon the tired steed and its rider a broader stronger blaze than appeared agreeable. A loud snort and scared glance however was the only result upon Sobieski. But Master Walter had no idea of further delay, he only wished to make sure of the

comfort of his horse before attending to his own.

"Where's your stable?" he demanded.

"Softly, sir," said the gruff voice.

"To the devil with your softly—shew me your stable. Do you take me for a thief? What are you afraid of?"

"Ho! ho!" laughed the man. "Afraid? Ho! ho! ho! Are you armed, young man? few dare venture on the heath after dark?"

"Come," said Master Walter, "my good fellow, whatever you may be, have done for heaven's sake and put up my horse."

"Put up your horse?" said the man, with an air of astonishment. "You'd better go to Wedham Cross, it's only nine miles, a fine night, and your horse is as fresh as a daisy. Ho! ho!"

"Ha! ha! he! he! hi! hi!" laughed half-a-dozen other men's voices, joining in chorus.

"Hang you for a surly hound!" said Master Walter, turning away from the door.

The gruff individual ran after him, and seized Sobieski by the bridle—

“Come,” said he, “it’s all right. I’ll see to your horse. Go into the house.”

Master Walter was not so deeply offended as to reject the proffered aid. The drizzling rain, and the prospect of a midnight cruise over “moss and moor,” served to moderate his resentment. He recovered his equanimity directly, and dismounting, followed the eccentric innkeeper (for such he seemed to be) to a stable on the other side of the dwelling. He was surprised to find a rather numerous stud—some ready saddled, and others littered up for the night—and was proceeding to make some enquiries, when he received an admonition from his host.

“Ask no questions,” said the latter, “and you will come better off, and take care how you quarrel with the folks inside. You will find them blaze up as quickly as a dry bonfire.”

“I know when to hold my tongue, and when to speak,” said Master Walter, who be-

gan to wonder what sort of company he had fallen in with.

He soon found himself in the interior of the house, seated comfortably beside a large fire which blazed furiously, roaring up the huge chimney, that occupied a considerable part of one side of the wall. A dead silence had greeted his entry, amongst a party of about a dozen men, attired like himself, in riding dresses of coarse material ; all carried pistols. They obsequiously made way for him.

After a little time, Master Walter, who had a happy knack of adapting himself to whatever society he found himself in, was hail-fellow-well-met with these men—whom he set down as possibly a parcel of highwaymen—and told stories, sang songs, and drank toasts with as much freedom as if the singular fraternity had been his friends and equals. At length the host stood up, and shouted in a harsh tone :

“ The black gelding’s dead, and Red Mantle must be hunted ! ”

At this the whole party rose, and raising

their "beakers," repeated the same words, and then bursting into a roar of laughter, rushed from the house.

The host, however, we should state, remained, and motioning Master Walter to follow him, led the way up a creaking stair, and shewed him into a rather cheerless and ill-furnished chamber, where he was immediately left to his own devices.

Something fatigued, Master Walter soon sank into profound repose, from which he did not awaken till the dull grey light of morning broke into his room.

He found his clothes dried, and his capacious boots brightly varnished beside his bed. It was not long before he descended into the sort of kitchen or hall, where he had passed the previous evening. Breakfast over, he demanded the reckoning. He was first stared—and then laughed at.

At the door, the gruff landlord, or whatever he might be, gave him some information about the road, adding a piece of parting advice, in

which Master Walter was directed to silence about what he had seen and heard.

“Return here no more,” said mine host in conclusion. “Recollect that curiosity is sometimes dangerous ; in this case it will be found useless.”

Whether it was that Master Walter’s potations had been rather too deep—and he fancied that could not have been the case as his head was pretty strong—or whether a damp bed had brought on a temporary indisposition, he could not say ; but he had not proceeded very far when he was seized with vertigo, lost the track he had been following, and found it in vain to recollect his bearings, or apply the directions he had received about the road he was to pursue.

In vain he galloped hither and thither, trying to pierce the fog, which still continued to creep along the ground, though the sun shone brightly above his head, and get a glimpse of the tall poplars. He found himself completely out of his reckoning, and adopting an expe-

dient which is popularly believed to be the most efficacious in such cases—dropped the reins on Sobieski's neck, trusting to the sagacity of the beast to extricate him from his dilemma.

“Most probably,” said he, “I shall find myself once more at my last night's halting place.”

Sobieski, without exhibiting either uncertainty or disquietude, proceeded in the direction in which his head was turned, walked about two hundred yards, and then struck into a track which Master Walter firmly believed to be the one he had lost. But it seemed such was not the case. A mile was finished, and still no signs of the tall poplars. Suddenly the track appeared to ascend—something loomed through the fog. Lo! it was the hostelry at last—but no, it was only a group of Scotch firs. The track was rough and rocky: he had then bid adieu to the heath? He was debating what course to pursue, when suddenly his steed, as if partaking

in the uncertainty of the rider, came to a dead stop.

The spur was in vain, Sobieski refused to move, and Master Walter discovered that some obstacle prevented the further progress of his trusty steed ; but that if unable to advance, he was equally unwilling to retire. Fortunately at that moment the breeze lifted the fog, and presently a wooded eminence, varied by rocks, brushwood, and verdant slopes, was disclosed to view. The trees were of no great height, being principally hazel and young birch. To make matters better, the sun was shining cheerfully on the hill side. Presently the fog vanished, and Master Walter perceived a human figure moving slowly along a winding path, and flattered himself that he should be able to obtain information concerning the road to C——. On observing this figure attentively, he discovered that it was that of a female of advanced age, attired in a scarlet cloak and steeple hat.

To judge from the whiteness of her hair,

her shrivelled and emaciated appearance, her cautious gait, and the curvature of her spine—she might have been a century old.

The equestrian had scarcely time to make these observations, when the old lady, aiding her progress with a stick, evaded further inspection by disappearing round the angle of a rock. We have omitted to state that the first discovery which Master Walter made at the dispersion of the mist was, that the obstacle which had impeded his progress was nothing but a rather thick tuft of gorse. Sobieski, under the altered circumstances of the case, had no further objections to proceed, but clearing the impediment at a single bound, obeyed the instinct of the rider, which prompted a pursuit of the old crone who had just been lost to view.

Master Walter followed hard upon the retreating figure, but what was his surprise when upon turning the angle of projecting rock, he overtook, instead of an unsightly and wizened beldame of five score, a

beautiful, half-pensive, half-sprightly girl of blooming seventeen!

It was difficult to explain how he could have been so misled: everything considered, there could be no doubt of the identity. It was next to impossible that the apparently elderly female could have made her escape at the pace at which she had been seen to move. There also was the mantle of red colour; but the steeple hat, upon close inspection, proved to be by no means so high in the crown as it had seemed, and bore the not unbecoming addition of a drooping black feather. In her hand the fair sylph, who was found sauntering along the path, as if enjoying the fineness of the morning, carelessly held a hazel wand, which she had probably picked up in the course of her walk. Master Walter could not account for the singular mistake he had made, except upon the supposition of an optical delusion, caused either by fog or the potations of the previous evening.

His astonishment served to increase his confusion, while he blurted out an apology for the too evident alarm which his sudden approach had caused to one of the most lovely beings he had ever seen.

Master Walter, taking off his hat, stammered out an excuse, and then dismounted, and led his steed by the bridle, while he more fully expressed his concern at the unnecessary alarm he had occasioned to the young lady, in his anxiety to demand the nearest way to C ——. The lovely stranger smiled graciously, while she informed him that he was fully pardoned for what had been a very trifling offence. She then expressed her regret, that she was unable to direct him how to proceed to the place he mentioned, but added, that her mother, whom she shortly expected to meet might be able to do so. This afforded Master Walter an excuse for commencing a very charming conversation, which was continued for several minutes, at the expiration of which a third person was seen approaching—

in due time presented as the "Mother" of the fair damsel, who was distinguished by the Christian name of Flora. There could be no doubt of the relationship which subsisted between the two ladies. Both had hair and eyes of the same colour; neither was there any difference in their height, which was about the middle size; indeed it might have been safely presumed that the mother, some five and twenty years previously, might have been very similar to her daughter. The elder personage, apologising for her ignorance concerning the road to C—— said, that if Master Walter would have the goodness to accompany them to their residence, which was not far distant, she would inquire of her servants; to that proposal Master Walter readily assented, and the party accordingly traversed a broad winding path through the woods, which became more dense as they proceeded, though with the exception of some pines and larch, the timber was rather stunted in growth. Before they had arrived at a rather dilapidated gateway

which formed the entrance to a grass-grown, and neglected avenue—Master Walter had heard enough of the fair Flora's conversation to decide that she did not belong to the class of young ladies he had been in the habit of meeting, and that in addition to a correct judgment and sprightly fancy, she possessed a store of knowledge on every subject which was perfectly astonishing. Possibly, as it was not far removed from the period when—if we may judge from a passage in the "Vicar of Wakefield"—"Shakspeare, taste, pictures, and the musical glasses," formed the only topics of conversation, Master Walter's standard of intellectual acquirements may not have been very high.

On arriving at the gateway (for there was no gate), Sobieski afforded the ladies some amusement by his objections to enter, manifested by planting his fore-legs obstinately, and resisting the efforts which the owner made to alter his determination. After a moment or two the little difficulty was overcome, and switching his tail and champing his bit, the

sagacious animal suffered himself to be quietly led up the avenue, and finally stood still in front of a very ancient Manor House, which was of great length, but—with the exception of a lofty attic afforded by a very steep roof, was confined to a basement story. A quantity of ivy, clematis, and other plants of the parasitical kind ran up the walls and red tiled roof, and clustered about the windows, which were each divided by two or more stone shafts. Sobieski was led to a stall, and Master Walter into the house. Both steed and rider had a longer rest than might have been anticipated, for, although a guide sufficiently informed as to the road to C—— was provided, an invitation to dinner—which was served at noon according to the custom of the period—proved too tempting, and thus his departure was postponed for several hours, during every moment of which the fascinations of Flora seemed to increase rather than diminish. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that when darkness began to render the

road uncertain, the visitor was easily prevailed upon to accept for a still longer period the hospitality of his kind entertainers, who pressed him to defer till the following morning his projected return to his own domicile. The afternoon had been passed in examining some of the rooms of the old house, which contained some curious specimens of tapestry and oak carving, and was furnished in a style which then as now, came under the title of "antique."

An old ruinous chapel, approached by a long passage, was attached to the house, and some attempts at ornamental grounds, after the style of Le Notre, appeared to have been relinquished. Both Flora and her mother made many apologies over half finished temples—fountains which had never played, and broken waterfalls, over which no stream had yet found its way; and laid the blame upon a grandfather or ancestor still more remote, who had been the cause of interrupting these works. A very social evening was enlivened

by music, for the fair Flora proved to be no ordinary performer on the harpsichord, to the harmony of which she added the melody of a remarkably soft and tuneful voice. The result of all this was, that when Master Walter sat alone in a comfortable chamber with a brisk wood fire, he began to find that an impression had been made upon his susceptible heart which he had never before experienced.


Two days elapsed and found him still unable to tear himself away; but when the third came he began to think it was really time to go. Accepting the proffered services of a guide, he accordingly took his leave, after receiving a hospitable invitation to renew his visit at the first opportunity.

His guide conducted him past the spot where he had so strangely mistaken a charming young girl for "a withered beldame," and proceeding across a sort of barren waste (possibly the same which he had wandered over in the fog), called his attention to the large quantities of flint strewed over the surface,

which bore a striking resemblance to portions of the bones of some species of animal. Master Walter had already taken notice of the circumstance, and was rather amused when the superstitious clown continued to inform him with imperturbable gravity that these bleached and whitened lumps, were in reality the remains of an army of giants, which had there perished of famine. Master Walter, he insinuated, might consider himself lucky in not having shared their fate on the occasion of his losing his way there the morning before.

About a couple of miles further they came to a road, and the equestrian was left to pursue the rest of his way by himself; and after a tedious ride of eighteen miles regained his paternal roof, where some anxiety had been entertained with regard to his safety.

Master Walter did not think it expedient to enter into explanations, but a certain absence of manner and negligence of costume, which had not hitherto distinguished him, gave rise to suspicions of the true state of the



case. Before two days elapsed the young man mounted his steed and galloped off in the same direction as before, and crossing the waste—this time without fog—entered the wood where he had met the solitary wanderer, and drew rein at the door of the old Manor House, where he was once more kindly welcomed.

It would be tedious to describe the progress of an absorbing passion through its various stages, suffice it to say that Master Walter neglected field sports as well as everything else, for the sake of basking in the smiles of Flora: and though his repeated absence from home was matter of wonder, and incurred the censure of his father—who seemed inclined to suspect that his son had taken to the highway—he continued to keep every one in ignorance of the real object which attracted him so far from the bosom of his family. It is scarcely to be expected, however, that this state of things could long continue, and the young man began to find his motions were

closely watched, and that the task of throwing dust in the eyes of his parents would soon become impossible: but he was decidedly averse to taking the old gentleman into confidence, having a secret misgiving as to the result; for he knew himself destined to lead to the hymeneal altar—on some unlucky day—the uninteresting daughter and heiress of an old lord, whose property was adjacent. Master Walter, whose inclinations had not been at all consulted in the matter, was less than ever disposed to contemplate with pleasure the projected alliance. He had been indifferent before, but he was now most decidedly averse to become the husband of the Earl's daughter.

Many were the artifices which the ingenious swain adopted in endeavouring to evade pursuit when betaking himself to the abode of the lovely Flora, who, living in complete seclusion with her mother, seemed perfectly unknown to the surrounding country. To prevent the discovery of the silken clue which led to Rosa-

mond's bower, our friend was in the habit of setting off at full gallop from his father's house in a direction diametrically opposite to that it was his intention to pursue. When he left home he usually started at an early hour in the morning. At length, one day he found an old hunting squire with a party of young fellows—whom Master Walter knew very well, but had latterly neglected—were secretly following in his track at a considerable distance behind. Believing that his parent was at the bottom of the plot, he was obliged to relinquish the idea of seeing Flora that day, and revenged himself by leading his officious friends such a dance as they were not likely to be again tempted to follow. The ensuing day he determined upon sallying forth at an hour when darkness would facilitate his flight. He accordingly did so, and favored by a heavy snow-storm, managed to find his way to the bleak waste previously alluded to, without being overtaken by anybody. Deprived of the track to guide him, he, however,

began to regret the step he had taken ; he urged his steed for some time in the direction in which he fancied the dwelling of Flora lay ; the sure-footed animal managed to pick his way over the ground, strewed with lumps of flint, in a manner which did credit to his sagacity ; but the snow still descending in feathery flakes, the waste—soon robed in a sheet of white, to which no bounds could anywhere be seen—forbad all hope of finding, unless by accident, the way to fair Flora's habitation, and the rider was fain to adopt the old expedient, and trust to his horse. He therefore did so, and was soon gratified to see, as the snow ceased to fall, a dark object on the horizon, which proved to be the hazel wood around the enchanted abode of his beloved. The moon broke coldly forth as he passed through the same path along which he had first trod by the side of Flora ; and showed, by the little icicles which hung from the twigs and branches above his head, that frost had set

in. Nothing loth to dismount, he soon found himself in front of the Manor House, and pulling an iron rod at the side of the gothic door-way, agitated a large bell suspended above. It sounded clear in the cold air, but no answer was returned to the summons. He now perceived that the door was only ajar, and not closed; he therefore determined to place Sobieski in the stable and enter the house. He did so, and wandered from room to room without finding an inhabitant. The long suite of tapestried and wainscoted chambers disposed upon the ground floor, opening one into another, was alone illumined by the moon, which peered coldly between the stone mullions of the windows. Neither fire nor lamp was to be found in any of them, and the old furniture and dark pictures and different objects which the room contained, assumed a grim and ghastly appearance in the pale rays which fell scantily over them. Being only "seven of the clock," it was very improbable that the inmates could have retired to rest;

and Master Walter did not know what to think.

“Mistress Flora ! Mistress Flora !” he cried, but no answer was returned to the anxious challenge.

He was about to retire to the chamber which was allotted to him, under the impression that however extraordinary the proceeding appeared, the ladies had retired for the night ; when arriving at the last chamber in the suite he perceived an open doorway, which he had never before noticed, and which seemed to lead into a dark passage ; into this Master Walter entered, because he thought he perceived a spark of light glimmering at the further end. As he groped his way along, it struck him that the passage must lead to the ruinous chapel, which he had not as yet entered ; the light became more distinct, and his surmises proved to be correct, for he presently entered a long, narrow, and rather high building, lighted by lancet windows, to which fragments of stained glass and broken

tracery gave a desolate appearance, and admitted enough of the chilly, frosty light, to make surrounding objects indistinctly visible. Some old black banners waved feebly on the walls, and a shattered crucifix, standing upon the high altar, before which a dim lamp was burning, shewed that the sadly dilapidated chapel was still employed in the service of the church of Rome. It was the first time Master Walter had seen anything to favor the supposition that his friends had not adopted the reformed faith, and though not at all inclined to bigotry, he afterwards related that a sensation of horror crept over him when, upon approaching the feeble spark, he observed two persons clothed from head to foot in crape, or some other black habiliments, lying prostrate upon the floor of this desolate temple of a departed creed. After a moment's pause, during which the dark objects, shewing little indication of being conscious of the presence of an intruder, remained perfectly motionless—the startling idea occurred to Master

Walter that something too dreadful to think of had happened; he approached, and was surprised to find that the two figures were lying upon the stone pavement, with their heads towards the door by which he had entered, and not towards the altar and crucifix, as he had supposed.

“Holy Virgin, they are dead!” was the passionate exclamation of the young man, in which he unintentionally used an expression which had never before passed his lips. As he said this he stooped down, and was enchanted to find that it was Flora whose form he enclasped, *she* at least was yet in the land of the living, for she slowly rose to her knees, while her mother unperceived noiselessly quitted the chapel.

“What has happened, my dear, dear Flora?” was the agitated question which Master Walter now put to the lovely girl, who, covering her face with a portion of the crape veil in which she was mantled, seemed to be torn

asunder with a paroxysm of grief,* which shook her whole frame; there was no reply, and the figure of Flora, sliding from his supporting hand, fell prostrate as before. His horror and amazement were intense, though it was some relief to know that his first suspicions were not correct. A plaintive voice, which he recognised immediately, was now heard from the further end of the chapel, earnestly beseeching him to look no longer on distress which it was totally out of his power to relieve in any way.

“Oh, leave us, leave us!” cried the mother of Flora, in a weeping tone, “this is an hour of sorrow—a night sacred to bitterest thoughts, in which you have no share. Depart, I beg and entreat; three days we must keep our vigil, after that—”

Master Walter had heard enough; he saw intrusion was impertinent as well as useless;

* Master Walter elsewhere stated that the enchanted lady was in no paroxysm of grief, but convulsed with laughter.

leaving reluctantly the figure of his adored Flora prostrate in an agony of grief, he passed from the chapel, and, without meeting the elder lady in his course, proceeded through the door and finally mounted upon Sobieski, departed upon his cheerless midnight journey as much astonished as afflicted with the scene he had just witnessed.

At midnight he arrived at his father's residence to pass a sleepless night. When three days had elapsed, he could no longer restrain the powerful anxiety he felt to see Flora, and offer consolation, as well as to discover the nature of the dreadful calamity which had plunged her mother and herself in such appalling distress.

The prohibition had not extended beyond the period alluded to ; accordingly Master Walter upon the fourth day after the event just detailed, galloped off in the usual direction, crossed the waste, and arrived at the spot where he had first met the interesting girl, about whom he was so deeply concerned ; the

thought of her sprightly gaiety, and of the smiling countenance which she wore when he first saw her, affected him painfully when he reflected upon the circumstances under which he had last seen her.

As he pondered in this way, the steed suddenly slackening his pace, snuffed the air, and looked anxiously from side to side, while he pricked up his ears, as if discerning some approaching danger; and when Master Walter looked about him, he fancied that he did not quite recognise the path; he, however, proceeded onwards. It seemed that the wood had greatly diminished in size. He soon concluded that he must have lost his way; he, therefore retraced his steps. This time he was determined not to make a mistake, and kept his attention fixed upon the objects around him.

Strange! the scene seemed changed; he could not find the gateway which led to the old Manor House. Again and again he retraced his steps, but with no better success. He tied

Sobieski to a tree, and pursued his investigations on foot in every direction, but he could neither see the avenue nor ornamental grounds. Nothing but a barren sort of upland—covered with grey rocks, and stunted hazel, birch, and other small trees—of which he remembered no feature after passing the point where he had first met the beautiful girl, who had for so many weeks occupied his fancy.

It was near evening when, after spending the whole day in prosecuting his research—after calling the name of Flora with the energy of despair, but without any other response than was returned by a faint echo—he came to the maddening conclusion that the whole had been the work of enchantment. Just at that moment the blast of a horn resounded in the distance, and soon a number of riders appeared galloping up from the flats. Again the horn was sounded, and Master Walter, who had been for the last three hours on his feet, began to think he had better look after Sobieski—who would be in danger of breaking away from the tree to which he had been tied —

—when suddenly beside the trunk of a sapless oak, he perceived a withered old crone, with a red mantle thrown about her shoulders, and a steeple hat upon her head, who, at no great distance, crouching upon the ground, seemed to cast an appealing glance in his direction. Her arms were skinny to a degree, and the ashen paleness of her shrivelled cheek was only exceeded by the whiteness of her long, disordered tresses.

The huntsmen who, by the way, were not accompanied by any hounds, would be upon him in a minute; and amid the wild shouts and boisterous laughter, he thought he heard a cry which sounded like, “Red Mantle! Red Mantle! Ho!”

The alarm of the old woman or witch, whatever she was, became great; her lips moved as if in speaking, but no sound came forth; fearfully she clutched her scarlet cloak, and slipping it off from her shoulders, offered it doubtingly to Master Walter, whose compassion was touched, for he thought as he took it from her hand that he perceived a

sort of dreamy likeness to that of his lost Flora. In another instant the miserable old wretch disappeared, and the riders with peals of laughter swept past at a prodigious pace, without appearing to notice him; he heard a horn sounding in the distance, but soon all was still, and, though he endeavoured to discover the hiding place of his mysterious acquaintance, with the twofold view of restoring her property, and learning something concerning her history, or that of others whom he had fancied must be in some way connected with her—in this search as in the other he was perfectly unsuccessful. The gift of the old crone, which he ever after cherished from the firm belief that it was the identical garment worn by his lost Flora, alone remained to prove to his incredulous friends that there was any truth at all in Master Walter's story of

RED MANTLE.

A note at the bottom informed the reader

that Master Walter was equally unsuccessful in an attempt to discover the landlord of the hostelry where he had passed the night on the occasion when he had been in the position of the belated traveller. He found the hostelry, but it was a ruin, and had every appearance of having been so for a century, at least!

A second note announced to St. Vincent that BARREN WOOD, was the supposed scene of the enchanted residence of Flora.

St. Vincent fell into a reverie on finishing this narrative, which seemed to bear a sort of mystical relation to his own romance.

The guns of Sebastopol were silent, and the snow was falling in heavy flakes, and drifting past the door of the tent which partly open, exposed to view a desolate white waste, reminding of the snow covered plain on which Master Walter lost his way.

This soon faded, and before his mind's eye rose the familiar picture of an old Hall on its craggy knoll amidst tufted trees. His visions (which from the expression of his face

must have been of no very bright character) were interrupted by the arrival of the English Mail.

One letter was eagerly seized for St. Vincent thought the handwriting resembled that of the fair transcriber of Red Mantle. He opened it, and saw his own. Several letters which he had written from Malta and Constantinople, were in fact returned to him. With a sigh he laid them quietly down, and opening another enclosure, found a number of closely written sheets, with Miss Crump's signature on the last page.

CHAPTER XIII.

"When possibly I can, I will return."

SHAKESPEARE.

It was late in the month of February, 1855, and the snow which had lain for many weeks on English ground—drifting in long ridges behind walls and hedges, choking up lanes, and rendering roads impassable—threw its white mantle over the park at Clare Hall, bringing out the old mansion with its woods, evergreens, rocks, and brushwood in dark relief. The stream, which in the earlier part of the winter poured an increased body of water, has again diminished to its summer flow, and the rocks in the bed are cased in ice, while its

banks are hanging with glistening icicles. The neighbourhood has shared in the distress and anxiety into which the whole of England is plunged by the accounts from the seat of war, where so many fathers and brothers and friends are suffering; and already has the railway station at Newington been besieged by boxes and parcels, containing every conceivable article which might tend to alleviate the sufferings, or minister to the comfort of the poor fellows on the bleak plateau of Sebastopol. Alas! long ere these could reach their destination, many a precious existence which they were designed to save would be sacrificed. There, as elsewhere, the effect of the protracted struggle began to be seen in the black dress at church, which perhaps denoted that an irreparable loss had been sustained.

In the midst of such a state of things it will not be difficult to conceive what were the feelings of Miss De Clare, who had hitherto received no other intelligence from the

Crimea than that which was contained in the doleful reports of the daily newspapers. As every fresh despatch, detailing the repulse of the nightly sortie from the beleaguered city came in, she trembled lest that irrevocable word, "Killed!" should be found attached to to the name of her lover.

The unfeeling Constantine meantime employed himself in the prosecution of his selfish schemes, and did not hesitate to practice upon each member of the family of his employer in the manner he considered best calculated to affect their peculiar characters and dispositions.

Herr von Augenblick was still on a visit with him, but the inmates of Clare Hall had not yet made the discovery that the facetious count was a mesmeric and homœopathic doctor, and a professor of the science of electrobiology. One evening, however, it came to pass that the much hackneyed subject of table-turning came on the tapis, and a rather ponderous piece of furniture was found to become

suddenly possessed of a tendency to revolve. On this occasion the count confessed his belief in the efficacy of mesmeric passes for the cure of certain disorders, and discoursed eloquently on the impalpable fluid called *od*.

On another occasion he performed a very singular feat, which was no other than that of reading correctly a portion of a certain page, in a closed book, which he professed never to have seen before. Sir Richard was puzzled and his wife frightened, when upon the book being opened the passage was discovered to have been quoted word for word. The baronet, however, laughed at the explanation vouchsafed by the count, which was to the effect that the faculty of seeing might be independent of the visual organs.

Herr von Augenblick next proposed to mesmerise some of the party, but completely failed in an attempt to put the baronet into a state of coma. Upon this he laughingly declared that if the ladies would submit to a similiar trial, he would be sure to succeed.

The ladies, however, declined to take the hint.

Whether the cold weather had affected the baronet's health or not, we are scarcely prepared to say; but as he was noticed to be uncommonly ill, except upon those occasions, when the count was present, it is probable that the enlivening conversation of Herr Augenblick was the means of rousing him from his customary apathetic state.

Late one evening towards the end of February, Miss De Clare, attired in her old costume of the red cloak, the hat and feather, and the lace veil tied beneath her chin, had sallied out of the house at the earnest request of her father, near whose bedside she had been constantly watching, for he had been in bed and very ill for the last two days. He said that she required fresh air, and that she must go out.

The snow was piled high on either side of the avenue, but a shower had fallen in the evening, whitening once more the path, which

had been scraped, till the dark ground was visible. The sombre skeleton forms of the trees on either side added gloom to the twilight, which scarcely afforded light enough to distinguish the prints of the little feet which so noiselessly moved along the undulating track. A figure presently advanced in another direction, which was soon recognized by Alice as that of Mr. Falkland.

"How is Sir Richard to-night?" was the first question of Mr. Falkland, in a tone which sounded strangely sad.

"Something better, I trust and hope," returned Alice. "At all events, neither of the doctors apprehend any danger."

"Thank God," said the vicar; "thank God. I came to see you, Alice," was his next remark, after a brief pause; "so if you like, we will turn back, for I have not much time."

Alice perceived something of agitation in the vicar's manner, and she asked him hurriedly if there was anything the matter.

There was no answer, so she repeated her question.

"My dear child," said the vicar, thus pressed, "I must confide to you a secret. I am going away."

"Going away!" echoed Alice in consternation: "Mr. Falkland!"

"Duty calls me," replied the vicar in a tremulous voice, "to another scene of labour, Alice; but I trust—at least I hope—I may some day return."

There was a fixedness of purpose in his sad tone which showed that his determination was made.

"I cannot at present tell you my destination," continued the vicar, "but I *must* go."

"*Must* go," repeated Miss De Clare, as if in a dream.

"I will shortly write to you, Alice, meantime say nothing to Sir Richard; it might, perhaps be prejudicial—"

"And when do you go?" interrupted the young lady.

“To-night.”

“To-night ! so soon ! Oh, this is sad news indeed ; to lose my oldest friend in this sudden way is hard—is hard to bear !” And occupied by her own grief, she could not see the tears which coursed each other rapidly down the cheeks of the kindhearted vicar.

“Every one I like seems to be taken away from me,” continued Alice, totally unable to repress the convulsive sobs which attested the violence of emotions, probably heightened by the state of nervous anxiety into which she had latterly been thrown. “I show but a poor example of patience, Mr. Falkland.”

The vicar could not find voice to reply, but a sudden thought flashed across his mind diverting the course of his sorrow.

They walked on in silence over the snow, and the breeze which came up from the direction of the distant churchyard felt chill and damp, for it had begun to thaw, and drops were shaken from the trees.

At this moment a turn of the road brought

them in contact with a messenger, who accosted them, and requested to know where Lady De Clare was to be found, for he was the bearer of a letter to her. Miss De Clare directed him to the hall, and after a short pause Mr. Falkland broke silence as follows:—

“You must not think me impertinent, Alice, if I ask you one question. What has become of Mr. St. Vincent, whom I used to meet here some time ago? They tell me he has gone to the Crimea. Has Sir Richard,—have any of you heard of him since? If it is a subject you do not like to talk about, don’t say anything.”

Mr. Falkland’s enquiry had probed the inmost recess of a tender heart, but it was a confiding one also. With a few more tears Alice related a portion of her little romance, ending by asserting her full faith in the constancy of St. Vincent, notwithstanding that appearances were against him.

The vicar, influenced probably as much by

the pre-conceived notion which he had formed of St. Vincent's character, was fully disposed to give credence to the hypothesis of Alice, viz., that accident had somehow detained letters which Arthur St. Vincent doubtless had written. He accordingly forebore to mention a report which he had heard—the reader will probably imagine who circulated it—that St. Vincent had been paying attentions to Miss Crump, not only in England, but at Malta, while on his way to the East.

Some encouraging remarks from the vicar led Alice to suspect what really was the case, that Mr. Falkland proposed going himself to the Crimea; and flattering herself that his absence would only be temporary, her grief at parting with him was very considerably moderated. Had she known—when he pressed her hand between both of his, and gave her his farewell blessing in a voice choked with emotion—that her much-loved William Falkland was no longer clergyman of the parish, where he had so long ministered, but

chaplain to the — division of the British army before Sebastopol—how deep would have been her distress.

A hackney carriage was at the door of the old vicarage, which had been so many years the home of the exemplary clergyman, and which was to have been that of a fair helpmate long since dead. Previous to his interview with Alice, Falkland had taken his last look at an apartment, the furniture of which had never been disturbed since a certain melancholy event; and now the parting hour was come, and the field where he had sown the good seed was to be left to the care of some new laborer. He had endeavoured to keep his departure a secret, but the fact could not be concealed. The grief of Grace had told the tale, for though she was to accompany Mr. Falkland, she was sorry on account of the errand upon which her kind master was going, and also felt much regret at leaving a neighbourhood with which she had long been familiar.

Thus the Vicar on reaching his door, found it besieged by a number of his parishioners of all ages, many of them weeping bitterly. It was more than the tender-hearted Falkland could bear, to see those familiar faces agitated by such distress on his account. He shook hands with every man, woman, and child there; he tried to speak, but could not utter a word, and getting into the carriage—which contained two small portmanteaus, one for himself, and one for the future hospital nurse at Scutari—he seated himself opposite his old housekeeper, and was driven away from the vicarage of St. Mary's, and the little flock he loved so well.

For many a long day they talked in the parish of the pastor who had been so good to the poor, who had always 'been a friend to those in distress, and who had shared the joys as well as the sorrows of those committed to his care, though his own earthy hopes were buried beneath a yew tree in the old church-yard.

CHAPTER XIV.

Glory to Arimanes! we, who bow
The necks of men, bow down before his throne.
MANFRED.

It will shortly be necessary to take a peep at the drawing-room at Clare Hall, where a singular scene occurred while Miss De Clare was walking in the avenue with Mr. Falkland. It will be incumbent on us, however, in the first place to throw some light upon the cause of the Clergyman's unexpected departure. Some weeks previous to the sudden event detailed in the foregoing chapter, Mr. Constantine Broadway called very early one morning at the Vicarage, and having found the Vicar alone, proceeded to take him into confidence.

"I am obliged," said the Agent, with the air of one who performs a very serious duty, "to consult you on a matter of some importance."

Mr. Falkland looked inquiringly at his visitor, but said nothing.

Broadway took a chair, and continued :

"I have the less delicacy in addressing you on a subject, which I might otherwise have some scruple in alluding to, because I know the man I have to deal with, and I am aware, Mr. Falkland, that you have the interests of a certain family deeply at heart."

Mr. Falkland now fancied he guessed the subject, though not the object of the agent's remarks.

"You are aware," resumed Constantine, "that when I undertook the management of Sir Richard's property, I found it in anything but a prosperous state?"

"I have heard so," assented the Vicar.

"The nominal rent roll was between £5,000

and £6,000 a year, but the actual receipts did not amount to a fourth of that sum."

"I think you told me so once before," said Mr. Falkland.

"His property in Ireland was heavily encumbered, his tenants emigrated to Australia or the United States with his rents in their pockets, his farms were neglected, and, in fact, ruin was staring him in the face."

"I was not aware that things were so bad as that," replied the Vicar. "His property here was always in a satisfactory state, I believe."

"Much of what he gathered in England had to be spent in Ireland," returned the agent dogmatically.

"I hope there is nothing amiss at present, Mr. Broadway," returned the Vicar, with some anxiety. "It was only the other day that the Baronet informed me in confidence of the admirable way in which you had managed his affairs for him. Several properties had

been well sold—in the Incumbered Estates Court, I think he said.”

“And the money which he got for them was badly invested, Mr. Falkland. If Sir Richard had taken my advice he would never have thrown his money into that C—— and West Newington Railway Company, the shares of which are now waste paper.”

Mr. Falkland was distressed to hear this unexpected intelligence.

“Dear me, Mr. Broadway, I now perceive why the Baronet’s health and spirits have been latterly affected in the manner they have.”

The agent felt inclined to smile, but he repressed his secret thought and said, in a pointed way :

“As I mention all this in the strictest confidence to you as a friend, and a distant relation (Am I right)? of the excellent old gentleman, I need not beg of you to keep the matter a close secret.”

The vicar had no idea of doing otherwise, and he stated as much.

“I have advanced large sums out of my own private purse,” said Constantine, looking curiously at the clergyman. “My father unfortunately cannot advance me any considerable amount at present, and I know not where to turn for money to postpone an impending misfortune, which might with timely precaution be altogether avoided.”

Whilst making this last observation, Broadway glanced out of the window with an air of abstraction.

“This is dreadful intelligence, Mr. Broadway. We must think of what can be done to avert the catastrophe which you say is impending.”

“What can we do, Mr. Falkland? I fear, really very little. If we had a few, a very few thousands, we might invest it in the improvement of the property at Killy Croharne, which would soon repay the outlay ten, or

fifteen fold, and recover every thing; but, all ready money just now must be applied to another purpose. Meanwhile Sir Richard's valuable Irish farms in the neighbourhood I have mentioned are going to ruin. Mr. Falkland," pursued Broadway, with the air of a man forced into a sudden and painful decision, "I must make a further disclosure. I have discovered—though the Baronet has concealed the fact—that the so-called 'Glebe lands of St. Mary's' are, in reality, the property of Sir Richard."

"What!" said the clergyman, in a tone of the utmost surprise and consternation,—continuing, after a pause, "Mr. Broadway, can this be really true?"

"As true as that Bible which we both reverence," returned the agent, with solemn deliberation.

There was another pause, and he continued, slowly and distinctly :

"If the lands *supposed* to be Glebe lands could be sold, *some* money might be realized;

but I do not see how we can do it under the circumstances."

"We can manage it, Mr. Broadway," said the Vicar, starting up, and walking excitedly about the apartment; "we *can* manage it; I will find some other employment."

The Vicar stopped, and looked earnestly at the agent, who shook his head, and said, he "feared the sale would not realise enough money to be of any use, besides what would become of the *generous* martyr to the scheme?" and a half sneer flitted over his face as he emphasized the adjective.

"Oh!" replied Falkland, "I could be content under the circumstance with a very humble curacy, which, I have no doubt, I could procure for myself."

The agent at length, with apparent reluctance, admitted that Mr. Falkland's proposal was worthy of further consideration.

"But," said he, "how would the family at Clare Hall be disposed towards parting with their old friend and relative?"

“As to that,” said Falkland, “they shall never learn the reasons which prompted the step, nor shall they know anything of the latter until it is irrecoverably taken.”

Constantine squeezed the hand of the clergyman, and left the vicarage, perfectly satisfied with the result of his wily diplomacy.

He had begun to dread the interference of the friend of the family in a matter which was progressing as favourably for his own interest as could be expected under all circumstances; Constantine had watched all parties closely, and he felt certain that the secret of Alice had not been confided to the Vicar. However, as it was not impossible that the latter might in time discover it, it would be prudent to get rid of a dangerous person as soon as possible, and the generous sympathies of an unsuspecting nature formed a safe ground to work upon. The Baronet and Falkland stood in the mutual position of only surviving relatives, and the agent, perfectly acquainted with all the particulars of the history of the latter, was

no doubt aware of the tender links of friendship and gratitude which the events of bygone times had cemented between the patron of the living of St. Mary's and its present incumbent.

The contingency of Mr. Falkland's soliciting and obtaining a chaplaincy to the forces in the East had not at first occurred to Broadway, and he was a little disturbed when on visiting the vicarage, at the request of Mr. Falkland, he learnt that the latter was to leave for the Crimea in the evening. The victim of the plot probably misinterpreted the unfeigned regret which the originator expressed.

"And, now," said Falkland, when he had announced his intentions. "I leave every thing to you. All the property which you find in the house may be disposed of, for every thing belongs to me—the books—the furniture, all may be sold for the purpose you have in view, with the exception of some things mentioned in this paper—a little work-table—some manuscripts—and a—and a portrait.

When I am gone let Miss De Clare have this list—she will take care of these things for me.”

The agent promised to comply with the clergyman’s wish.

“I am happy to say I have a few hundred pounds, the fruit of former literary labours, Mr. Broadway (here Mr. Falkland smiled sorrowfully). They are heartily at Sir Richard’s service, and, I only wish I had more to give. I shall be able to add a considerable portion of my future income to this sum, for my wants are but few. Do not suppose that I am left quite destitute—I have two coats, whereas some apostles are said to have been contented with only one.” Smiling more brightly, he put a check into the hands of the agent.

A chance glimpse of virtue’s shining face is sometimes more potent than the most fervid eloquence.

Constantine Broadway took the piece of paper, looked at it for a moment, and prompted

by a feeling of shame laid it upon the table. For a moment he perceived that ambition was vanity, and that gold was sordid dross. But a demon whispered in his ear and the spell of the charmer was lost. He took possession of the poor clergyman's gold, with the intention of returning it at some future period, and leaving the old vicarage, walked moodily across the park towards the Raven's Nest.

We must now fulfil our pledge with regard to the description of a scene, which took place in the drawing-room at Clare Hall, upon the evening of the vicar's departure.

We have previously mentioned the spacious and lofty apartment with its oak wainscoting and antique furniture, in which a wood-fire piled high beneath the large projecting fireplace, now threw out a degree of warmth very seasonable for the time of year, and cast up a red glare upon the dark wall, and carved oak ceiling eclipsing the colder reflection from the snow-covered slopes of the park. The pen-

dants and bosses which hung in regular lines from the ceiling caught the light of the fire upon their polished surface and salient points, and the venerable high-backed chairs, tables, and cabinets, seemed to be covered with little scintillations.

On either side of the fire-place two persons were seated. One was Lady De Clare, and the other was the ubiquitous Constantine.

"There I differ from you, Lady De Clare," said the Agent, in answer to an opinion expressed by the wife of his employer, with whom he had been some time conversing. "There I differ from you—I think the disorder of the Baronet is entirely of a nervous character, and in this idea I am supported by the experience of my friend the Count, who has seen many similar cases—a very talented man that."

"Is he then a physician by profession?" asked Lady De Clare.

"He is," returned Constantine, "not that I should wish Sir Richard to know it at pre-

sent. He is a professor, Lady De Clare, of the only science which has ever benefited the neuralgic patient, and that is—can you guess?”

“No,” said Lady De Clare, “what?”

“Mesmerism !”

“Are you joking, Mr. Broadway?”

“No, indeed, I am perfectly serious,” returned the Agent, with an air of candour. “Many extraordinary cures have been effected by the agency of this wonderful but only half developed science, which in the native country of my friend, Herr Von Augenblick, has numerous disciples.”

“But the leading periodicals of the day, Mr. Broadway, (the *Quarterly Review* for instance) have pronounced against it, have they not? It was only a short time ago that I read in the periodical I have mentioned, something, which to the best of my opinion, ridiculed the subject altogether.”

“The *Quarterly Review* is not infallible,” observed Constantine, changing his attitude

as a man does, who hears an argument brought forward which perplexes him. "Facts are what I look to for proofs."

Lady De Clare looked thoughtfully at the red embers on the hearth for a moment or two, and then said :

"Have you ever seen anything yourself, Mr. Broadway, which would justify a belief in such things?"

"Certainly," replied Broadway, "I am a living instance of the success which attends upon the science. You may not believe it, but I was completely cured of rheumatism in one sitting."

"How very singular!" said Lady De Clare. "I wish I could get rid of mine in the same expeditious manner."

"Are you a sufferer? I am sorry to hear it, but I never heard you complain."

"For some months past I have had a severe pain in my left shoulder."

"The left did you say?"

"Yes."

"Exactly—are you aware that the left side is the weaker of the two?"

"Is it really?"

"Not a doubt of it; would you like to learn the exact manner in which I was cured?"

"I should."

Mr. Constantine produced from his pocket two circular objects not larger than a half-crown. "Did you ever see one of these things before?" said he, holding up one of them between his finger and thumb.

"No," answered Lady De Clare, bending forward, "I think not, what is it?"

"Did you ever hear of a galvanic ring?" asked the Agent in a confident tone.

"Oh! yes," returned Lady De Clare, who was becoming curious, "I have seen one; that which you have in your hand is a similar sort of thing, I suppose?"

"Precisely—let me advise you to try it."

"How is it done?"

"What was that?" said Broadway, suddenly starting.

"Where? what?" said Lady De Clare, casting a look of alarm round the dusky apartment.

"Nothing," said Constantine, "I believe we are sometimes afraid of our own shadows. It would be a capital scene for a ghost story—an old room faintly lighted by the dull rays of a wood fire—but this is nonsense. If you take these two pieces of metal—don't be alarmed, one is zinc and the other is copper—in your hand, and look at them fixedly, while I hold my watch and tell you when to stop. You will soon see the beneficial effect."

Constantine had risen and placed the little disks of metal in the hand of the half-shrinking lady, who with a short laugh, expressive of wonder and curiosity, obeyed the directions of Broadway; the latter stooping over steadily regarded his watch by the light of the fire.

There was a dead silence, only once interrupted by the voice of Constantine urging Lady De Clare to keep her eyes fixed on the disks of copper and zinc.

"Now," said Broadway, returning his watch to his waistcoat pocket and rising slowly, "sit perfectly quiet and don't speak—pardon me."

He moved her chair a little, so that she could see his face distinctly by the light of the fire.

"Look at me," said the Agent in a determined voice.

The patient did as she was desired, and Constantine bending down and staring into her eyes, suddenly raised his right arm and grasped the top of her head, placing his thumb on her forehead with the fingers of the same hand disposed after the fashion of a claw over the crown. In this attitude with his face close to that of the lady, he remained for a quarter of a minute. Meantime the victim of this extraordinary treatment appeared exceedingly terrified, and indeed there was something malignant in the eager glance of this man, who bore at the moment no faint resemblance to one of those evil genii in a fairy tale, who

after a brief struggle overcomes a weak and helpless antagonist. The obscurity of the apartment gave a tone of horror to this proceeding. Presently with a second downward pressure—as if it had been his intention to crush the head of the unresisting victim—the elbow was lowered, the hand released and withdrawn, and the operator resumed his place at the opposite side of the fire. “How’s your rheumatism now?” said he in scornful tone—“quite well?”

The lady looked fearfully at him and echoed mechanically, “quite well.”

“What is the matter with you?” said Broadway, raising his voice and assuming a sharp harsh tone. “You’re forgetting yourself.” An uneasy look was the only response.

“Do you know your own name, do you think?”

“Ye-y-yes.”

“You do not,” said the other, very decidedly, “what is it?”

Lady De Clare looked puzzled ; Broadway laughed ; she could not recollect her name.

“ Who and what are you ? ” asked the Agent rising and turning his back to the fire to warm himself ; Lady De Clare had not a word to say. There was a long pause—Broadway laughed again. “ Give me back what you have in your hand.”

The patient complied mechanically. At that moment a servant entered the room and presented a letter to his mistress.

“ A letter for you,” said Broadway ; Lady De Clare looked at it, the servant retired. “ That letter is for me and *not* for you,” said Broadway in a steady tone, “ look at it again.”

Lady De Clare had begun to open the letter, but she now turned to look at the direction.

“ Constantine Broadway, Esq., isn’t it ? ” demanded the Agent.

“ It is,” said Lady De Clare, handing it.

Broadway looked at the letter, at first

carelessly, then with close scrutiny, smiled, and put it in his pocket. For a second time chance had favored him marvellously, and a very important document had fallen into his hands.

Had Alice taken the packet from the hand of the messenger who had been sent from Winslow's paternal mansion, the mystery which enveloped the departure of St. Vincent would have been solved, and the machinations of atrocious villany would have been frustrated. Reflecting upon the very opportune moment which he had chosen for his scientific experiment, Broadway began to think he had gone far enough at present. He accordingly changed his tone, and reassured the person who so recently had been reduced to a state of utter imbecility.

Here we cannot help offering a little gratuitous advice to people whose imaginations are stronger than their nerves. It is this,—
Beware of a science called Electro-Biology.

You may laugh, gentle reader, but the caution is a wise one.

"I dare say," remarked Broadway, in a soothing tone, "I dare say you thought my manner very odd just now, Lady De Clare?"

"I did indeed," returned the person lately experimented upon, who did not yet seem quite herself.

"Very likely now it appears to you as if I was endeavouring to impress you with a kind of awe."

"Perfectly so; it was like a horrid nightmare. Don't look at me in that way, Mr. Broadway, I cannot bear it—Pray don't."

"My dear Lady De Clare, I see distinctly that the rheumatism you complain of is nothing but neuralgia, as I said. You will never be troubled with it again. I only *appeared* to be trying to frighten you. It was an optical delusion produced by galvanic action. Keep yourself quiet, and don't mention what you have been undergoing. I am so

sorry that you should fancy that I was exerting an undue influence over you."

"It is a singular thing," remarked Lady De Clare, forgetting that she had not felt any twinge of rheumatism since the previous day, "that the pain in my shoulder has gone away entirely since you—since you—"

Broadway interrupted, — "Now go and play on the piano, if you please, Lady De Clare. Let me have the same piece you performed the other night."

The lady obediently complied, and Constantine, throwing some logs on the fire, made a cheerful blaze. Next he lighted the candles on the chimney piece, and leaving Lady De Clare at the instrument, coolly read the letter which had been intended for her. Presently he quitted the room and returned to the Raven's Nest, where he passed the evening in company with the Count and two old acquaintances of ours, whose names the reader will probably guess.

Drinking a good deal, and laughing still

more, the vilest jests and the most horrible blasphemies were heard by the idiot boy, who shivered on his hard bed in the dark loft above, but his dull comprehension was in this case a decided advantage.

There was one joke which De Maine (who by the way, seemed rather aghast at the excess of impiety on the part of the rest) could never understand, though it was several times repeated. The Count was the originator, and whenever he said—

“Er hat Katzen-jammer!” both Broadway and Winter appeared convulsed with laughter.

CHAPTER XV.

Lorsque le medecin fait rire le malade,
C'est le meilleur signe du monde. Hé-bien,
De quoi est-il question ? qu'avez vous ?
Quel est le mal que vous sentez ?

MOLIERE.

WHEN a traveller has proceeded some way on a journey, and begins to fancy he sees the dim outline of the mountain which he knows to be not far distant from his destination, he generally feels inclined to accelerate his pace. We find ourselves in a somewhat analagous position. Our pen has wandered over many pages, and probably will not have to urge its course over many more. As the conclusion approaches we feel desirous to proceed with

greater rapidity. We propose, therefore, to yield to this impulse, and pass cursorily over events which occupy several months. It will no doubt be remembered—supposing that the reader perused our last chapter—that the last time we visited Clare Hall was on an evening in February, when the darkened drawing-room became the scene of a scientific experiment on the part of Constantine Broadway. Curious to relate, Lady De Clare was never afterwards troubled with rheumatism. She, however, discovered that she had made no very agreeable exchange. She abstained from mentioning the subject of the *séance*, but was always conscious of a secret influence which Constantine exerted over her, and which she found it impossible to shake off. A request from him, when supported by a peculiar look, had altogether the effect of a command.

The following incident will exemplify this phenomenon. It happened not long after the eventful evening alluded to, that the Baronet, being so far recovered as to appear at the din-

ner table, had asked the Count and Constantine to join the family party. Sir Richard had a fashion of talking while eating his dinner, without appearing to notice whether he carried his hearers along with him or not. On this occasion he had much to say about the misconduct of the ministry in the management of the war, while he very justly passed a high eulogium on the fortitude exhibited by the brave troops, indulging in a triumphant eulogy of the "solidité" displayed by the British soldier at Inkermann. During the middle of the oration, Constantine asked Lady De Clare to take wine, and while she was raising the glass to her lips, added quickly, in an under tone, "You can't swallow it."

Immediately the poor lady began to cough, as if she had been choked. Broadway and the Count exchanged glances. The Baronet, interrupted in his harangue, demanded: "What on earth was the matter?" while Broadway had time to request Lady De Clare

to say nothing, as she might alarm Sir Richard.

He explained to her afterwards that the experiment was for the benefit of the Count, who, he said, was now convinced that her cure was complete. He again recommended secrecy, and pressed upon her the importance of advising Sir Richard to place himself entirely under the care of his scientific friend.

“But why is there so much mystery about this, Mr. Broadway?” asked Lady De Clare, with a perplexed air.

“My dear madam, like all other things, the science requires *faith*—if you place Sir Richard on his guard, he will persuade himself against it, and the treatment will fail. Think over your own case, and you will doubtless remember that I contrived to take you completely by surprise—am I not right?”

Lady De Clare could not but assent to the truth of the assertion.

Strange as it may appear, Alice was not

admitted into these secrets ; but she could not help seeing that Constantine had acquired a certain ascendancy over her mother. Vague suspicions of the probable cause entered into her mind ; firstly, she feared that the agent, in answer to his communication with St. Vincent, had received some tidings of an unpleasant character ; her mother's reserved manner contributed to support this idea ; secondly, that her father's still impaired state of health, or something connected with his affairs, was secretly a subject of discussion—lastly, a question presented itself: “What if Constantine, secretly influenced by motives of rivalry, had been trying to prejudice her lover in her mother's eyes, while at the same time he was using means to ingratiate himself.” This suspicion was, however, in its turn dismissed, not only as unworthy, but as being unsupported by conclusive evidence.

True, once or twice she had fancied the attentions of Constantine exceeded those which simple friendship would dictate ;

but were not people often deceived in such matters? In fine, she determined to rely upon the agent's amicable intentions, believing that an unjust suspicion entertained is really culpable, whereas confidence misplaced is only a misfortune.


Meantime spring came on, but no intelligence respecting her lover arrived, excepting that Broadway had professed to have learnt—(how, she did not venture to enquire) — that he was in the enjoyment of good health; and that a letter from Mr. Falkland, dated Constantinople, had mentioned that St. Vincent was reported to be “up at the front” with his regiment. The depôt had been removed from Newington, and the barracks were now occupied by militia. Our heroine, however, consoled herself with the prospect of shortly receiving a letter from the amiable clergyman, who she knew would make it his first business to visit the camp of the Loyal Britons on his arrival in the Crimea.

Mr. Constantine Broadway having thought

proper to postpone the sale of the "so called Glebe lands" of St. Mary's, both Lady De Clare and her daughter were left in the belief that the absence of the exemplary Falkland was only temporary.

This saved them from the very deep regret which they would have felt had they known the true state of the case. Indeed, they had quite enough of anxiety on their minds. The Baronet's health grew worse and worse, he was often confined to his room, and the doctors appeared quite undecided as to his case; one believed his liver to be implicated, another that his brain was affected, a third that his whole system was disorganized.

In a multitude of counsellors there is safety, but when all the counsels differ we might as well have none. One morning a discussion unfortunately occurred in a room adjacent to the Baronet's sleeping apartment (at a time when he was supposed to be in a lethargic slumber), respecting the future course of treatment which it would be politic to adopt.



One doctor recommended one thing, another another, a third differed from both ; but the baronet settled the dispute by informing them all when they approached, that he could now dispense with their services altogether, for he would have no more of their remedies. In this determination, which he faithfully adhered to, he was probably supported by the information he had gathered from the count respecting the success which attended homœopathic treatment in many cases. Herr von Augenblick possessed considerable address, he had also afforded much amusement to the baronet, who dearly loved the language of Schiller and Göthe, and whose recollections of Germany were associated with some of the pleasantest days of his youth, as well as those of his maturer years.

With the Count he could wander once more on the banks of the Rhine, pondering over the wonderful legend, which invested with romantic interest this or that ruined tower, and occasionally digressing to notice the peculiar-

ities of the Teutonic dialects. When the baronet was confined to his room, the count, it may be imagined, had little difficulty in obtaining the entrée, and was soon thoroughly established in the good graces of Sir Richard, who was ever slow to suspect anyone of being actuated by selfish or designing motives.

It can scarcely be a matter of surprise that Sir Richard, at length yielding to the suggestions of the Count, commenced taking infinitesimal globules of counter-irritant poison on the very day after three accredited physicians had retired from the house, although they had studied at Universities, walked hospitals, and had the whole *materia medica* at their fingers' ends. What will appear still more extraordinary to the disbeliever in the science of homœopathy, after a very few days, the baronet began to derive considerable benefit from the treatment. In fact, so much had his health improved in the course of a few weeks, that it was with some regret Lady De Clare and Alice heard the announcement

of the count's intended departure at the expiration of that period. It was in vain that they used every effort to induce him to stay. The Count could not be prevailed upon to postpone his departure; he said he had "very much business in Germany to do," and declining to take any fee, hoped he should be able to visit England at no distant period. In the meantime, 'should the baronet again *krank* become,' he could not do better than consult Mr. Broadway, with whom the Count left a good supply of medicines, and who in fact, now knew nearly as much as himself. "Herr Broadway," said the foreigner, "ist schon ein sehr berühmt Arzt,"—he would soon in fact become perfect, for "Uebung macht der MEISTER."

"Atieu!" said the count.

"Bis gleich!" returned the baronet, and the Count took his leave.

Everyone was in hopes that Sir Richard would be soon perfectly restored to health, and that he would be able to set both doctors

and physic at defiance. In this hope they were, however, doomed to disappointment.

About two months after the departure of the Count, all the old symptoms returned in an aggravated form. The agent now was called in, in a medical capacity, and the Baronet in default of other advisers was constrained to make the rather perilous experiment of trusting to the skill of a person, who though very confident of his own powers, could have had but little or no experience in the practice of a science which some think but doubtful at the best. The return of spring, which brought little comfort to Alice or her mother, failed to restore Sir Richard to his wonted vigour. His family tried to induce him to leave England for a short time, or at all events, to try change of air, but Sir Richard would not hear of such a thing; he remained, and gradually got worse, until at length the agent declared his intention of writing to request the Count to come back at all hazards. Constantine also privately informed the ladies

that he found Sir Richard no longer capable of properly transacting business, a piece of intelligence which alarmed them much. They would have persuaded Sir Richard to consult some eminent London physician. He, however, was resolutely bent on doing nothing of the kind.

It was during the month of April that Constantine, taking Lady De Clare and her daughter into confidence, informed them that by a certain unfortunate failure, Sir Richard had suffered a very heavy pecuniary loss. The responsibility of concealing this fact from Sir Richard was, he said, very great. He felt, however, that the disclosure of the circumstance would be most prejudicial to the Baronet's health and spirits at the moment. He therefore hoped Lady De Clare would offer some advice. His own opinion was, he said, "that the best course would be to request Mr. Falkland to make it convenient to return as soon as possible."

This plan being agreed to, Constantine—

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who in offering an explanation of various matters of business to the ladies, contrived only to perplex them—was requested to take the sole management of affairs into his hands, while the Baronet was to be kept in ignorance of anything which might occasion him distress or anxiety. It is wonderful how fortune seemed to aid the designs of this bad man. Not many days after the above resolution had been adopted, Clare Hall, as well as the whole parish, was plunged into the most profound affliction by the lamentable tidings of the death of poor Falkland!

CHAPTER XVI.

*Spes incerta futuri.*VIRG. *ÆN.*

THROUGHOUT the summer, notwithstanding that the Count paid a second visit of several weeks, effecting for the time some amelioration in the Baronet's case, Sir Richard's health remained in a very critical state. Misfortunes seemed gathering round a once happy home, and when the leaves once more began to be tinged with a slight shade of autumnal color, the two fair inmates, attired in the black dress which still commemorated the loss of their faithful pastor, went mournfully about, as if endeavouring to be resigned to a hard

fate. An eminent London physician had declared that he could not undertake to pronounce on the Baronet's complaint. He advised the trial of certain severe remedies, but Sir Richard could not be prevailed upon to adopt what appeared to be only experimental, nor did his family like to urge anything upon him, which did not promise some degree of certainty. A visit to the German baths was recommended, but nothing would induce the proprietor of the Hall to leave it. To this cause of anxiety others were added, which pressed heavily upon the mind of poor Alice. Her mother's health began to suffer from the complication of unfortunate events. There was besides, a secret grief gnawing at the heart of the faithful girl. The amiable exertions of the kind friend and relative towards elucidating the mystery which enveloped an old subject of contemplation, had been frustrated by his untimely decease, and continued reports of the good understanding which had secretly subsisted between St. Vin-

cent and the Preston heiress began to fill her with doubt and uncertainty.

There is nothing so cruel as suspense, and the more nicely the balance between hope and fear is adjusted, the more depressing is the effect. The newspapers contained the name of St. Vincent as having been severely wounded in the attack on the Redan on the 18th of June, the parenthesis of (doing well) which was subjoined, afforded, however, some relief; but when it came to be reported through several channels that the wounded man had gone to Malta for change of air, and that he was on the point of being married to the Preston heiress, the sense of so great a slight was not less heavily felt because the heart which it wounded was a very sensitive, though a very gentle one. She would have sacrificed all for him, and he was going to prove himself unworthy—this was indeed the gall of bitterness. Constantine perceived her thoughts, and was not slow to turn every thing to his own advantage. His manner be-

trayed respectful sympathy, and Alice observing it, began almost to fancy that what was reported to be about to happen, had actually taken place. One evening, towards the end of the month of August, the agent was found by the young lady seated beside her mother at the drawing-room fire.

His manner seemed particularly dejected. Miss De Clare was so much struck with the circumstance, that she thought it her duty to enquire into the cause.

"My poor brother, Miss De Clare," was all that Constantine appeared to be able to articulate. "This evening's post," he continued presently, "has brought me the sad intelligence that my father, provoked by his long course of intemperance, has disinherited him."

Alice observed the speaker attentively, but the histrionic performance was cleverly managed, and it deceived her. She looked at him twice, and remained silent, wondering at a display of feeling, which she had not thought him capable of.

“What grieves me most,” soliloquised Broadway, “is, that I fear I shall never see him again. I have just been telling Lady De Clare of his unfortunate behaviour on being informed of his father’s determination. He had no sooner heard the sentence, than, making some preparations for departure, he went to Liverpool, and embarked for the United States; what will become of him I know not. Had he only confided in me, I would have secretly yielded the right which my father now gives me, and been content with a small share of the large income which will fall to me. I will send after him, however, by the very next mail. My poor brother!”

A half suspicion hovered for a moment in Alice’s mind; she recollected however, the untiring zeal which Constantine had exhibited in her father’s behalf, watching him by night, and reading to him by day, and suppressed it.

When Alice retired to rest that evening, she began to think that the high opinion which her mother had latterly often expressed in

favor of Constantine Broadway was not altogether without foundation. What, if the want of cordiality between the agent and St. Vincent had been occasioned by the knowledge of the duplicity of the latter? But no, the old idea *would* return in spite of everything. She could not entertain hard thoughts of one once beloved. Adverse circumstances had combined to disturb for a time the visions so fondly cherished by two unfortunate, but not unfaithful lovers; and hoping, as it were, against hope, she fell asleep, and dreamed of her wounded hero.

CHAPTER XVII.

Since the case stands as now it doth,
I think it best you married with the County.

SHAKESPEARE.


THE morning after he had delivered his pathetic lament over the fallen fortunes of his elder brother, Mr. Constantine Broadway, with an approving glance at himself in the mirror (for he had bestowed more than ordinary pains upon his toilet), walked forth from the Raven's Nest, with the intention of presenting himself at Clare Hall. He found the ladies in the drawing-room. It was about ten o'clock, and they had done breakfast, but Sir Richard was not yet awake.

Presently a bell rang, and a servant an-

nounced that his master wished to see Lady De Clare, the consequence of which was, that the agent and Alice were left by themselves. Some months ago such an opportunity would not have been suffered to pass without an attempt on the part of Constantine to induce the young lady to submit to the same discipline which had been so successful in the case of her mother. The subject had always been artfully introduced, for in this instance there was no neuralgic plea to seize upon. The young lady, however, could not be persuaded to submit to the experiment, and the agent, not wishing to awaken suspicion, after a time relinquished the idea altogether.

For a few minutes they sat perfectly still; and the serious expression which both assumed was in harmony with the habit of mourning which they wore; but the similitude went no further. The raven and the dove were not more unlike.

The Agent did not fail to notice that the paleness of Miss De Clare's countenance bore



a striking contrast to her black dress. But instead of being affected with pity for the mental suffering which had now begun to tinge her beauty with a melancholy caste, the momentary glance which he directed towards her betrayed censure rather than commiseration. It is not impossible that having some confidence in his own personal attractions, he was slightly chagrined that an impression which had been made by another proved so difficult to efface. Alice, bending over some work, was perfectly innocent of the thoughts (whatever they may have been) which passed through the mind of the sombre person who sat eyeing her askance. This accomplished actor could, however, assume what expression he chose. Happening to look up after the expiration of a few seconds, Alice perceived unmistakable indications of pain and agitation in a countenance which since yesterday had begun to be invested with a greater degree of interest. Before she had time to make any remark (if such had been

her intention), Contantine said hurriedly "Miss De Clare, I am the bearer of dreadful intelligence."

Alice dropped her work in consternation, and her startled gaze was fixed upon the speaker's face.

"Sir Richard is utterly RUINED! You have often heard before of heavy incumbrances on a certain portion of his property :—within a very few days a creditor will press for a sum which we cannot meet. His Irish property must go into the Encumbered Estates Court, and the place here—park, house, and all—I fear must go to the hammer."

He threw her a letter—she seized it with trembling hands, and read the announcement of threatened proceedings for £40,000. The fatal epistle dropped on the carpet, while, covering her face, she exclaimed in a piteous tone, "Oh, my father, my poor father."

The Agent rose and walked rapidly to and fro: suddenly Alice started up—

"Mr. Broadway, something must and some-

thing can be done ; I will go myself and implore a respite if all other means fail. Who is the creditor—Mr. Scriven ?”

“ Alas !” returned Broadway, “ he only acts for another, who is inexorable. Oh, my dear young lady, there is one way, one only way ; but whatever the cost, it *must* it *shall* be done.”

Alice looked eagerly and enquiringly at his face, as a faint glimmering of hope began to dawn. She was somewhat startled, when Constantine threw himself at her feet and burst into tears.

What ? had Constantine been the author of the mischief, and was he going to make a confession ? She did not know what to expect.

“ Bear with me, bear with me for a moment,” entreated the agent. A shade of anger flitted across that beautiful face ; but it again vanished into an expression of fixed attention.

“ Miss De Clare,” said Constantine, imploringly, “ I have £20,000 of my own ; listen to what I propose to do : I will this day place it in the hands of Mr. Scriven, adding

at the same time a bond for £20,000 more, with such interest as may accumulate, payable at my father's death. Will you condescend to accept this? Oh, forgive me if I offend in making such a proposal. I see no other way to save your father's property—perhaps his life. Do not think of obligations incurred by the acceptance; the sacrifice will be a solemn pleasure. I have long loved you secretly. I can no longer bear the torments I feel. Death will soon rid me of them, and you of a paltry debt, which none shall ever claim. It is my intention to enlist, and seek a soldier's death in the Crimea."

He concluded his prayer in a tone of abject misery, leaving Alice confused, perplexed, and overcome by a variety of emotions.

"Farewell, Miss De Clare," said Constantine, rising and turning away, "forgive the weakness of these tears. I have lingered too long at the gates of paradise to be able to leave them without a sigh."

"Stop, Mr. Broadway, I must not, I can-

not—" but the command was not heeded; the Agent rushed from the room and from the house.

Shortly afterwards Lady De Clare learnt from her daughter's lips the dismal tidings of impending ruin, and the extraordinary self-sacrificing scheme by which Constantine proposed to ward it off. What was to be done? Could they accept the proffered aid, and suffer the generous benefactor to enrol himself as a private in the ranks of the British Army, and to rush madly on destruction in the deadly breach at Sebastopol? Impossible—the crime would be unpardonable. He must be prevented from putting his design into execution. They must send after him, stop him, and turn him from his too generous purpose. And then a picture presented itself of the poor Baronet, carried helpless from the house of his fathers—to die perhaps of grief.

A terrible question suggested itself to the mind of Alice, as to the duty of adopting a middle course, and with a sinking of heart,

she began to think whether her father's immunity from distress ought not to be secured by rewarding the true devotion of another.

In the cold accents of despair, which her mother perhaps mistook for indifference, the thought was darkly spoken. "Were I convinced of the unfaithfulness of another," said she, "I should now have one anxiety less."

The recent conduct of Constantine Broadway (who had used every art, first to subdue, and then to ingratiate himself with Lady De Clare) suggested a comparison very unfavourable to Arthur St. Vincent, whose good fame had been slowly undermined and finally destroyed.

In a moment of indignation, she divulged a secret which she had kept for several weeks. No sooner had her daughter made the remark we have related, than Lady De Clare going to a small cabinet, produced a folded newspaper, directed in several places by a female hand. The paper was *The Malta Gazette*. It was unfolded, and a trembling finger

pointed out an announcement, which sent every trace of color from the beautiful countenance of Alice.

MARRIED.

By special license, on the 22nd July, at No. 25, Strada Forni, Arthur St Vincent, Captain of her Majesty's — Foot, to Hester, only daughter of the late William Crump, of Preston, Lancashire.

Without a word or a tear, Miss De Clare walked slowly from the room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

My heart is wonderous light
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaimed.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN her dressing-room late one night Constantine stood before his mother. "The bird trapped," said he, "and must be caged directly; no time is to be lost."

Mrs. Broadway looked darkly at him, but she seemed after an instant to comprehend his meaning. She made room for him at the fire, and he seated himself.

"I knew—I was certain you would eventually triumph," said she.

"Triumph? Pshaw! what is it? scarce

worth my while. The daughter of a half cracked Baronet, with a few thousands a year."

"That is something, however," said his mother smiling. "There's a certain *eclat* in the thing too, for her beauty will make a sensation."

"If it had not been for that fiddler, I might have relinquished the pursuit, but I have never yet allowed myself to be thwarted by anybody."

"It is a pity that so old a title should become extinct," observed Mrs. Broadway, meditatively. "Well, well—perhaps your eldest son may be allowed to inherit it. And when must the ceremony take place?"

"This day week, I want it settled—her father cannot last long."

"What's the matter with him?" demanded his mother, with an inquisitive air, which had something of alarm in it.

Broadway looked into the fire, shrugged his shoulders, and said: "Heaven knows, I don't,

general breaking up, I suppose. Some or all of you must go down for the wedding—you can put up at Amalfi, I want *you* there in particular.”

“This day week?”

“Yes. We shall be married in the evening, to render the ceremony more imposing, and we shall have a puff in the *Morning Post*..”

“Oh! that will be charming,” assented his mother. “My girls always look best at night.”

“You must open the ball-room again at Amalfi on the occasion; and receive all your friends there—we cannot disturb a sick house. My own opinion is, the whole family are booked for the next world—wherever that is.”

“Oh! you shocking boy!” said his mother, playfully tapping him with her fan, which she had taken up to screen her face from the fire. “I see you have not got over your infidel notions yet.”

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"Are the girls gone to bed?" said her son, without heeding the remark.

"Yes."

"And Winter?"

"Yes—oh! talking of her, your sisters have discovered (nobody knows how, they are so uncommonly clever) that Private Paul Bold, or Sergeant, I beg his pardon, ha! ha! (a disreputable affair that) is coming home directly, and means to come here—he shall be shewn into the scullery when he arrives."

"Winter," said Constantine, "must not come to the wedding, though I should have liked her to have been one of the bridesmaids, for she's not bad looking."

"I am dying," said Mrs. Broadway, after she had assented to the command of her son, "I am dying to hear how you struck the final blow."

"Pooh, a mere nothing," returned her son, "I saw she was beginning to take for gospel all the stories we have spread."

•

“ Oh !”

“ One night I was distressed, because ‘ his father’s pet ’ was disinherited, and I should be the gainer.”

Mrs. Broadway opened her eyes.

“ Next I shewed them that they were about to be ruined, and that nothing on earth could save Clare Hall from the hammer, and dear daddy from a prison.”

“ Ha, ha !”

“ Finally that I would pay all their debts, go and enlist, and get picked off at Sebastopol.”

“ What ! and leave your poor mother to die of grief ? Oh, you cruel boy !”

“ I could stay no longer in England, because I was so devilish sentimental about her ;” (here he smiled sardonically) “ that existence was a burthen to me.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! Oh, you naughty,—you very naughty boy. I shall disinherit you. (I hope nobody can hear us). Well, go on, dear.”

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“ In a paroxysm of despair, I left her.”

“ Unfeeling monster, ha ! ha ! ha ! ”

Mrs. Broadway was much entertained, but when Constantine detailed his views with respect to the probable cause of the abrupt decision on the part of Alice to accept him, mentioning that Lady De Clare most probably had received the *Malta Gazette*, containing a certain announcement—the strong-minded woman, who had failed in the attempt to ensnare the Preston heiress (as our readers will remember), was now so intensely amused that she burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, which lasted several minutes.

As it grows late, we shall leave Mrs. Broadway to her slumbers or her thoughts, and before Alice De Clare plights her faith to Sir Richard’s agent, we shall venture to say a few words concerning him, but not in his defence.

Unscrupulous ambition was one of the distinguishing characteristics of Mr. Constantine Broadway—a hard heart—a keen under-

standing—and great force of character, were accessories, which, had opportunity been afforded, might have given him an infamous pre-eminence over his fellow men.

Unmerciful and implacable, but capable of feigning emotions, which he could not feel—he not inaptly represented the caste of heroes who head revolutions, and “wade through slaughter to a throne.”

For some years his restless, mischievous spirit had found vent in gambling speculations. He had travelled to many cities. At Paris, Rome, Venice, and on the Rhine, he had been seen shuffling cards, rattling dice, and making extraordinary strokes at billiards, in salons, where the glare of lamps struggled with the grey light of morning; but what he won quickly was spent with similar rapidity, for his habits were expensive, and it was his constant desire to take the lead in everything.

Something fatigued with the sameness of such pursuits, when he approached the age of five-and-thirty, he longed for a more exten-

sive sphere of action, where he could play for a larger stake. Nothing was too lofty for his aspirations—he would work his way into Parliament—head a party, and upset the kingdom. He believed he could discern, looming in the distant future, a war of jarring interests—a church annihilated, and a throne overturned. He would help on the work of destruction, and then, Phoenix-like, start from chaos, robed in flame and vengeance. He would seize the sword of state, and wade in blood until he could found an imperial dynasty—and leave a name to history—at the sound of which, future ages should tremble and quake.

Fearing nothing—believing nothing—he never dreamt that he was himself only a slave of the invisible master he imitated, who would one day bid him admire the ingenuity of a splendid cheat.

CHAPTER XIX.

What singular emotions fill,
Their bosoms, who have been induced to roam !
With fluttering doubts, if all be well or ill,
With love for many, and with fears for some ;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to the starting post.

BYRON.

VERY late one evening in September, 1855, a steamer, which had left Malta some days previously, drew near the Southampton Docks. The weather was foggy, and the Captain of the vessel, standing sometimes on the paddle boxes, and sometimes on the bridge between them, delivered such sharp and decisive directions as were necessary, in order to avoid collision with the various moving and sta-

tionary objects which were encountered. At times the paddles were stopped, and the roaring of the steam almost drowned the shouts of the strong-voiced mariners; and then, after a pause, the huge piston began to work, and a white track was once more made in the dark waters. Baggage heaped upon the deck; passengers turning up to sniff the land-breeze which was tainted with the usual admixture of a smell of oil, wet swabs, pitch, &c., or to look after portmanteaus, missing carpet bags, and hat boxes; clustering masts ahead, and lights from the shore, which reflected in the water, cross each other as relative positions are changed—all this shows that certain homeward-bound travellers would soon be once more in old England.

In two of the passengers who stand upon the deck, we recognize old friends; the taller and more athletic form of the two is that of Paul Bold, and the reader will find no difficulty in guessing the other, when we state that the empty left sleeve of his coatee tells the

tale of a severe wound received at the attack of the Redan on the 18th. of June.

After much suffering, the former dépôt Adjutant returns with impaired health to the country which he left eleven months ago. The sea air has done something to restore exhausted nature, but Major St. Vincent is no longer the man he was. Paul Bold and he have been great friends—accident having brought them in contact—one proceeding home on private affairs, and the other at the recommendation of a Medical Board—they continued to travel together.

It is our duty to state by way of explanation, that Paul Bold wears plain clothes, and has no longer the appearance of "the common dragoon," which excited so much contempt on the part of the Miss Broadways.

Not many days previously to that which promises to place these heroes once more on *terra firma*, they made the incidental discovery that Newington was a locality interesting to them both, and Paul Bold, on referring to one

of Miss Winter's letters found a passage which possessed a rather alarming interest for St. Vincent. It referred to Miss De Clare, and intimated that the writer "feared that Alice would become the victim of the plots of designing people." It was only at starting on his homeward voyage that St. Vincent received a soiled and crumpled letter, dated many months back, in the hand of poor Falkland. The contents had filled him with hope and anxiety, and the information now obtained from Bold, increased the latter feeling considerably; none will therefore be surprised that on landing at Southampton, he was eager to pursue his journey immediately. It was perhaps fortunate, considering his weak state of health, that the last up-train had departed before they stepped on the Wharf at Southampton.

"What are the bells ringing for?" was a question which was shouted from the deck of the steamer. "The Malakoff is taken," was the reply of several voices, which called forth expressions of delight from both

soldiers, who only regretted that after sharing the hardest toils of the campaign, they should be excluded from witnessing its close. Favored by the darkness as well as the lateness of the evening, the maimed soldier escaped the hecatomb of sympathy so freely bestowed at this period on objects so deserving of it, and in company with Paul Bold, proceeded towards the "Dolphin," followed closely by an individual with a hand cart, containing their portmanteaus, whose tongue betrayed his nationality.

"Begorra, sir, did you come from Blastherapool, thin?"

"Begorra, we did," returned Paul Bold.

"Will, now," was the response,—there was a short pause—"and was you *in* it, sir?"

"Of course we were, Paddy."

"Well, yer honour, I'm as free from money as a frog is from feathers, but if I had twinty pounds, I'd give every pinny of it to go look at that *infernal* fortification!"

At this original speech the two soldiers laughed.

"Ye did'nt see the takin' of the Malakoff, sir?"

"Malakoff? I should think not."

"Now, will there be many *Rooshians* destroyed, sir?"

"Oh, yes, lots."

"See that, now! And will there be many Frinch?"

"Yes, plenty of French, too."

"Oh, glory! that's hard an thim."

"Now will there be many English kilt?"

"I'm afraid there will, Paddy."

"Ach! 'tis well to be thinnin' thim always."

"You want a little thinning yourself, Paddy. You'd better go and enlist."

"Is it me, sir? What good 'ud I get? Shure I know twinty min in this same town—some is blind, some has lost an arrum like you, sir (this was addressed to St. Vincent), some has ne'er a leg left to stand on, and others is broke

entirely, and the divil a ha'porth one of them has got, bekase they had'nt put their time in. At laste, there's a boy called Barney Macmanus, and he's the bist off, for they gev him a wooden leg and sixpence a day for six months."

The two gentlemen said something to one another in hearty condemnation of the iniquitous system pursued with regard to disabled soldiers discharged from the service with insufficient pensions, while the loquacious Irishman continued to pour forth exaggerated complaints against the Saxon.

"You ought to be in Parliament, Paddy," said Paul Bold at last, "for you have a wonderful gift of the gab. Would you like a seat in Parliament?"

"Begorra, yer Honor, I'd rather have a *sate* in my breeches!"

Leaving our two heroes to their repose in the hotel, at which they presently arrived, we shall proceed to the relation of other matters of importance.

CHAPTER XX.

———— as the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to church,”
ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE old church of St. Mary's, which now contained a tablet to the memory of poor Falkland, was illuminated by wax candles—disposed not only round the church, but on the altar. The size of the building rendered the attempt at effect a decided failure. A red glare, however, made its way through the lancet-shaped windows, announcing to belated travellers along the road that something unusual was going on.

Notwithstanding the precautions of the per-

sons most nearly concerned in the approaching nuptial ceremony, to keep the affair as secret as possible, by nine o'clock a considerable crowd had assembled in the sacred edifice, gaping in astonishment at the unwonted preparations for a wedding at so very unusual an hour—while others were collected at the old gateway of the church-yard awaiting the arrival of the bridal party. Many and various were the comments which were passed upon the suddenness of a marriage at which nobody particularly rejoiced, for the affection and respect with which Miss De Clare was universally regarded by the people in the neighbourhood, were not by any means extended to the person who was about to lead her to the altar. Presently the noise of carriage wheels was heard, and two lights were seen approaching along the dark arcade of the shady road.

“Here they come,” said one. “No,” said another, “that’s Newington way.” And so it proved, for the equipage stopped at the

church gate, and some people in full dress got out of it; they were only some of Mrs. Broadway's friends. Another and another carriage drew up in succession, discharging their respective freights. When at length from the opposite direction the leading people in the forthcoming pageant made their appearance, Constantine stepped out of a Brougham and stalked gravely into the church, while the organ pealed forth a loud Jubilate; and Alice, accompanied by Mrs. Broadway and her two daughters, soon after alighted. It was noticed by all that the bride looked pale, nervous, and exceedingly miserable, as she walked down the aisle, regarding, with a vacant glance, a scene which had something unusual, if not Romish in its character.

It is in the last degree improbable that Miss De Clare should have felt either happy, or even completely resigned, to a fate which doomed her to be the wife of a man whom she could never love. While the ungenerous proceeding on the part of her betrothed in hurrying

forward, without any obvious necessity, the ratification of a bond by which a father's ruin was to be averted, gave rise to the most painful misgivings. In addition to other causes, a sudden change for the worse in Sir Richard's health rendered Lady De Clare's attendance upon him indispensable at this moment. Thus the presence of a mother who would have given Alice some support during so trying a ceremony, was denied her, and another pang inflicted upon a heart which was worthy of every comforting sympathy.

There was therefore no earthly consolation for her, and the cold church, and the colder friends by whom she was surrounded (for the Miss Broadways were too much occupied by their dress and appearance to pay any attention to the bride), were altogether in unison with the heartless ceremony which now commenced. The usual question to the persons assembled respecting the existence of any just cause or impediment, was received and answered by a dead silence; and without flinch-

ing, Constantine endured the awful interrogation when put more directly to himself. There was none to stop a marriage, which so far as one of the principals was concerned, was truly "made in hell." The fatal assent was given, the ring was placed upon the finger of the trembling hand, and with convulsive sobs, the bride, for the last time in her life, signed the name of Alice De Clare.

Several times during the ceremony the clergymen, who had been the innocent instruments in completing this ill-assorted match, had noticed the forced composure of the bride, but when they saw the intense distress of the poor girl, when the union which no man can break asunder had been irrevocably concluded, they were filled with surprise, for Constantine—whose distant relatives they were—had obviously deceived them into a belief that the attachment was mutual, and of some years' standing.

With a lofty air, as if disdaining at once his

conquest and the crowd through which he passed, Constantine walked down the aisle with Alice on his arm, while the organ, as had been pre-arranged by himself, thundered out the Hallelujah Chorus ; but when he arrived at the door of the church—where two servants, bearing flaring torches in their hands, prepared to usher the bridal procession through the dark graveyard to the gateway at which the carriages were waiting—a letter was placed in his hands, which caused a momentary change in his demeanour. He was observed to look perplexed and uneasy, but the sequel will show that he by no means lost his presence of mind.

The following account of the transaction appears somewhat improbable, and we can only plead as an apology for offering it, that the story obtained currency.

It has been stated that a tall, dark man, on a black horse, rode up to the gate of the church-yard, and there fastening his horse,

dismounted, and pulling his slouched hat over his eyes, advanced to the church door, placed a letter in the hands of Broadway, whom he met at the threshold, and departed.

The envelope, which bore a deep black edge, is said to have been addressed with the ancient superscription of, "Ride and run till this be delivered. Haste—haste—post haste ! For thy life ! for thy life ! for thy life !" with the addition of the words, "On *His* Majesty's Service," which, according to the same authority, were supposed to contain a dark and mysterious allusion. The original informant, according to his own account, deciphered the following contents :—

"TRUSTY FRIEND,

"The Citadel has fallen—but look well if the prize be worth keeping. *You will shortly have to appear before us* (by what means, you will hereafter learn). Active measures must be taken to ward off a more pressing danger."

We believe that this rather ghostly and improbable tale had its origin in the fact, that a letter was despatched from Winter, warning his friend that some matter of vital importance demanded his instant appearance at Newington.

The successful termination of the siege of Sebastopol may have been announced in the communication, or a witticism may have been intended in some allusion to a "fallen citadel."

Whether Constantine Broadway understood the precise meaning of the tidings he received does not appear. Certain it is, however, that instead of proceeding in the carriage with his bride—as he had, of course, intended—he went straight to Newington by some other conveyance. In walking towards the gate of the church-yard, his manner became thoughtful, and before he placed Alice in the carriage, he informed her that she would have to await his arrival in a place appointed; concluding the remark with the following piece of information :

“Would you believe it?” said he, with a searching look, “Our friend St Vincent, who was stated by the papers,* as having married that red-haired girl, is coming home a bachelor, after all!”

It is hard to say what object Broadway really had in communicating this intelligence at such a moment. That it was an act of pure malice is far from probable—though it is not difficult to conceive, that flattered by that personal vanity, from which he was by no means exempt, he, perhaps, may have imagined that the old lover—eclipsed by the attractions of the new—was now entirely forgotten. The test, however, did not produce the result he may have hoped for. A gleam of devil shot from his eyes, as he marked the overwhelming effect which this sudden news produced. The look was not unnoticed by the poor girl, who had been so sadly deceived; and it would be easier to imagine than to describe her mingled

* The author of the statement in the *Malta Gazette* may easily be guessed.

feelings of despair and terror as she was driven off in obedience to the command of her husband, who had sent away the link-bearers, to prevent people from noticing that he did not enter the carriage with his wife.

CHAPTER XXI.

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions.

SHAKESPEARE.

THROUGH the shades of night a carriage proceeds along an ascending road, where grey spectral rocks and dark woods border the way. The wheels rumble, and the lamps make the shadows blacker by contrast. The post-boy, rising in his stirrups, jogs along, only wondering if the rain, of which he feels a few drops, will be heavier before he gets back to Newington.

In a corner of the carriage sits the bride, who has been so cruelly deceived, and so

cruelly enlightened when all too late. Choking sobs, and comfortless bursts of weeping betray the bitterness of a grief which none can share. Flashing back to other days memory reflects a hundred pictures often dwelt on with passionate interest—the Torero gallantly perilling his life, the pilgrim so idolatrously worshipping at her shrine, the soldier fighting for Queen and country—how many scenes, how many hopes, how many fears are conjured up! But last of all rises the sad tableau of the future—a wounded hero returning to reap the reward of constancy!—Ah! misery, hopeless and profound—no marvel that thought turns toward the mouldering heaps and white tombstones in the churchyard.

Forward, still forward goes the bridal equipage, and from the dark tower frowning above the glen a feeble spark glimmers in the sombre landscape like a will o'the wisp.

Before the lonely dwelling the carriage at length draws up, the daughter of the Jewess steps from the rumble behind, and poor Alice

is twice invited to alight ere she obeys a summons, unheard, or scarce comprehended.

“It’s Mr. Broadway’s directions,” says Rose, “that you are to stop here, and that the carriage is to be dismissed.”

The insolent manner of the attendant would not, perhaps, at another time have escaped the observation of Alice. With a feeble effort to hide her emotion, the poor bride—as if wholly indifferent to any fate which might now await her—followed Rose up the stairs, and was no sooner alone, in a room usually occupied by Constantine Broadway as a sleeping apartment, than she abandoned herself once more to the painful conflict of her feelings, and flinging herself upon her knees, besought her Maker to release her from an intolerable existence.

Rose now turning the key in the door of the chamber got into the carriage, and drove away, leaving her mistress alone in the “Raven’s Nest,” for the idiot boy had escaped some months previously, and was never after-

wards heard of. The rest of the agent's establishment had either been dismissed, or had been granted leave of absence for the evening.

CHAPTER XXII.

“Why, have these banished and forbidden *legs*,
Dar’d once to touch a dust of England’s ground !”
SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now follow Constantine Broadway, who, as detailed in the last chapter, has gone into Newington on business of an urgent nature. About an hour after the conclusion of the ceremony, which gave him a legal right to exercise authority over the person and fortunes of poor Alice De Clare, the agent entered an apartment where sat two persons, one of whom was almost as great a scoundrel as himself.

“I am devilish glad to see you, Broadway,”

said Mr. Winter, "I knew you would come; pray sit down and make yourself perfectly at home."

Broadway did not look more amiable than usual as he replied in a domineering tone, "What keeps you here? Don't you know I can send you both to jail? You have missed the boat in which your passage was paid, though my letter stated to you that this business in Baltimore is of the most pressing nature. I should have thought a thousand pounds was enough to tempt a pair of black-legs like yourselves to do a job which any attorney's clerk would undertake for a fifth of the sum."

Winter produced a bottle of champagne and a single glass.

"We want our kind friend," said he, with great composure, "to drink to our prosperous voyage, in the same liquor which he so thoughtfully sent to the port of embarkation, and which he stated to be a cure for seasickness."

A peculiar ghastly expression quivered upon Broadway's countenance the moment the wine was produced; but he presently assumed an air of well-feigned surprise. The sparkling beverage, poured out by Ralph Winter, remained untasted by Broadway, notwithstanding the scornful taunts by which he was invited to drink.

"Why don't you swallow a bumper? I'll give you a toast, 'the old Baronet's health, and health and happiness to your wife!' Ha! ha!"

Broadway seized him by the throat. "Leave go," said De Maine, "the police are within call." Constantine, thus threatened, commanded Winter to speak in a lower tone, and to say what he had to say, and have done with it.

"I'm coming to it," said Winter; "but try that again, and it will be the worse for you. I've something to tell you that by — you little dream of."

"Tell it and be d——d to you, then," replied Broadway.

“First, then, several witnesses can prove that your excellent cure for sea-sickness killed a cat in the brief space of a quarter of an hour—stand back!”

“Fool! coward! I shall not touch you, get on with your story.”

“The steamer was just starting, but my friend and I having well studied your letter, decided that the course you proposed, could do you no possible good. We therefore neither embarked in the steamer to New York—in which you had so thoughtfully procured our berths, nor did we change our names in order to elude justice, which you were afraid might overtake us. The sum you offer is not sufficiently large to tempt us. I want ten thousand pounds, and when I have received that, we’ll talk of honor among thieves; make out a cheque for the amount, and I’ll answer for silence on the part of the firm of De Maine and Winter.”

All this time De Maine said nothing, but

left his case completely in the hands of Winter.

"And what am I to gain by all this?" said Constantine, with a sneer; "I am not to be frightened like a child or a woman. You have compromised yourself, and no one will believe what you say."

"Listen," said Winter,—“Sir Gilbert De Claredied in Baltimore—you pretended to want certain facts collected there—in reality you hoped and expected, that two fools, with false names and credentials, would die on their passage to New York.”

"Go on!" thundered Constantine, with a tremendous oath.

"Pay attention," said Winter, lowering his voice to a whisper. "We have been sent on a particular errand—and you imagine that in marrying Miss De Clare, you are marrying an heiress. Hear this! she has not a half-penny in the world, and what is still worse, I say, you never did a madder act than to

walk into church with her as you have done this evening."

"An absurd lie!" said Broadway scornfully, "a d—ble, foolish, silly lie!"

Winter rose, and whispered something in the ear of Constantine, who again made a disdainful answer. But, when further communication had taken place, and a letter had been handed to Broadway, his manner became serious; and after consenting to pay down a sum of ten thousand pounds to Winter, on certain conditions, he left the room with a moody air, and departed on his midnight journey towards the 'Raven's Nest,' cherishing hatred against the person he had so recently sworn to love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Qu'important, ces pleurs ?

O ! douleur impuissante ! O ! regrets superflus !

Je vis hélas ! Je vis et mon amie n'est plus !

CHURCH bells madly ringing in great cities announced the triumph of an allied army, and the roar of Artillery had pealed forth a requiem of a burning fortress, and a siege more illustrious than any since that which Homer sang.

One, who had seen something of the deadly struggle, was now occupied with other thoughts. St. Vincent was far on the old familiar road which led from Newington to Clare Hall.

Such was his agitation on arriving at the

town where the depôt of the "Loyal Britons" was no longer stationed, that he relinquished the idea of deferring, until a more seasonable hour, his projected visit to the enchanted regions, over which the old romantic light was once more cast. Not daring to ask a question concerning his friends, on arriving at the terminus, he at once procured a hackney carriage, and was proceeding, as we have stated, towards his destination.

He was scarcely aware of his weak state, or of the fact that with Crimean fever still hanging about him, he was but ill fitted for such a journey.

Looking from the windows of the carriage, and tracing the well remembered outlines of a hundred objects, though something obscured by the darkness—he felt inclined to question the reality of the scenes he had witnessed in the far distant arena of strife. Were the hardships, sufferings and anxieties which he seemed to remember, nothing but the gloomy incidents of a dream? Was he still Adjutant

at Newington, and spending days and weeks in careless happiness? Alas! the emaciated frame and the missing limb, told the poor feverish dreamer that there was only too much reality in the past. Still matters might have been worse, he had every reason to be thankful; and should he find the inmates of Clare Hall well and happy he would not ask more, nor waste time in useless laments over days when life wore a brighter aspect; and here a dreary resolution made some time ago, occurred to him, and he felt it would be his duty to put it in practice.

In the meantime he was fast approaching the old Hall, and the thought produced a thrill of mingled anxiety and delight. He heard the noise of the waterfall at the Danish Bridge, and gazing anxiously over its white and flimsy form, which was just discernible in the black darkness, tried in vain to catch the outline of the old mansion behind. After passing the bridge, one or two carriages, throwing out a refulgence from their lamps

which kissed the feathery foliage of the trees overhanging the road, darted quickly past, but the returned Crimean never dreamt of the object which had brought them out that night. The postern and St. Mary's Priory were soon left behind, not without a passing thought upon a well remembered event. The gate! the gate next! In less than ten minutes he would arrive at the home of one so tenderly beloved.

He did not, however, proceed so far, for perceiving the old church faintly illuminated, a crowd dispersing, and a solitary carriage driving off, a dismal idea suggested itself, and calling out to the driver to stop, he alighted, and, after asking a question, walked into the church, where an old sexton, whose face he recollected, was employed in extinguishing the lights. It seemed as if funeral obsequies had been performed according to the rites of the Church of Rome, and involuntarily the scene in the chapel as described in the legend of Red Mantle recurred to his recollection.

“In the name of charity tell me what has happened?” asked St. Vincent, who either had not heard or had not understood the answer he had received from a retreating group at the gate.

There are some words which sink into the very soul, and there remain with an impression as distinct as if they were written in brass or graved on marble. The simple response of the old sexton was of this character, and to his latest hour St. Vincent would recall the tone, the expression, and the appearance of the man, who now announced a fact of which the reader is already in possession.

Less than this might have upset a mind already affected by that incipient delirium which accompanies the first stage of fever. St. Vincent walked out of the church as if in a dream—proceeded along the road, and entering the Monk’s Gate (which had been left open for the convenience, or more probably by the carelessness of some of the servants attending the marriage ceremony of their young mis-

tress)—wandered for hours about old haunts, in rain and darkness. A sort of vague idea of having lost something was mixed up with confused notions of what had really happened.

Somewhere in the shady ravine below the Raven's Nest, and within hearing of the roar of the stream, he sat upon a bank and tried to recollect where he was, and what had brought him to such a scene at so lonely an hour. A break in the trees above giving a glimpse of the dull sky, threw a sufficient light to distinguish the spectral-looking forms of grey rocks ; he could also see the stems of the trees contrasting with the white foaming torrent, visible through the gaps between—an old song sounded in his ears—

River, river, flowing river,
Deep and dark, and sad art thou !

Strange are the phantasies of the brain ; suddenly a pale figure seemed to glide slowly past, bearing, as he afterwards positively asserted, a distinct resemblance to the person so

long the subject of his thoughts. He tried to speak, but his tongue refused to move. And now his thoughts became more and more confused and indistinct, and when two persons came to his assistance—the driver of the carriage which had brought him, and another—both of whom had followed him cautiously at some distance, not knowing whether the stranger was in possession of his right mind or not—they found him in a helpless state.

By their united efforts he was taken back to the postern, placed in the cab, and finally transported to 'The Steeplechase Arms,' where the next day, a physician seeing him, declared that he was in a very critical state.

We have now to relate a most appalling and horrible event. It had rained all night at Clare Hall, and the stream which fell into the Dane's Pool had swelled to unusual proportions, almost choking up the arches of the old bridge, and threatening to force an outlet across the road. Early in the morning succeeding the nuptial ceremony, some persons

on their way to Newington—for it was market day—observed a small white object protruding above the surface of the pool, which having got into an eddy, was whirled slowly round and round in the yellow and muddy water. Now verging on the margin of the rapid current in the centre of the basin, which threatened to catch and force it under the pointed arches—now making a distant sweep, and finally nearing the wall of the bridge, it attracted the attention of the inquisitive. At length two young fellows, fancying that this white object formed a portion of a costly dress, determined to make an effort to secure it. After several unsuccessful efforts to reach it without extraneous aid, one of them climbed the wall of the park, and proceeded to possess himself of a portion of the branch of one of the elm trees, which as we have previously stated, overhung the road which was the scene of the rescue from the bull.

What was the horror of the little crowd which soon assembled, when, after repeated

but unavailing attempts to detach what appeared to be a white satin petticoat from a heavy weight which kept it partially submerged, a combined effort raised from the water the body of a female.

It was shockingly disfigured, but the light symmetrical form, and the long fine golden hair, betrayed the youth of the deceased ; some one, recognising a bridal dress, of which he had taken particular notice on the preceding evening, proclaimed in accents of terror and dismay, that Sir Richard's daughter had been murdered !

CHAPTER XXIV.

Villany, villany, villany !
I think upon't,—I think,—I smell't ;—O, villany !
SHAKESPEARE.

It seemed as if the blind goddess had been strangely favorable to the atrocious villain whom we left wending his way under cover of darkness towards the "Raven's Nest."

A very few days before that appointed for the celebration of his marriage, the sudden death of the member for Newington left that borough unrepresented in Parliament.

No sooner was the report confirmed, than Mr. Constantine Broadway published an address to the free and independent electors, which, whatever were its merits, was little

likely to please his future father-in-law. The Agent had hitherto pretended Conservative opinions, but to the surprise of many, he now professed a total change of sentiments, which he begged his friends to understand was not the effect of a wavering judgment, but of sincere and honest conviction, the result of closer study, and a more intimate acquaintance with the science of politics. Many other things said this manifesto, but the spirit was embodied in placards which appeared in all directions on the very morning after the marriage, coupling the name of the candidate with the watchwords by which he intended to ensure a triumph at the hustings.

Great was the astonishment of former partizans on seeing, in large black letters, such words as "Broadway and Vote by Ballot!" "Vote for Broadway and Financial Reform!" "Broadway and Freetrade in Religion, &c., &c.!" On this eventful morning however, the politics of Mr. Broadway were forgotten, for a certain painful catastrophe,

with which his name was associated, was soon in everybody's mouth. It was with a thrill of horror that men heard that a coroner's inquest was to be held upon the remains of a young lady, who not many hours previously had been led to the hymeneal altar by the candidate for public favor.

Mr. Broadway, senior, on hearing some indistinct rumours, which he did not believe, drove out at about twelve o'clock, in the direction of Clare Hall, to satisfy his curiosity.

His position as a magistrate, he thought, entitled him to the privilege of inquiring into the circumstance, whatever it should turn out to be:

Upon the road a messenger intercepted him with a note from Constantine, requesting his immediate presence, and desiring to know whether he had heard of "the terrible and melancholy event which had taken place?"

Mr. Broadway turned pale on reading this despatch, and putting a question or two to the

person who brought it, proceeded rapidly in the direction of the Danish Bridge.

In front of the cottage formerly occupied by Mrs. Winter, he found a dense crowd collected, waiting with intense eagerness to hear what verdict would be given ; for it was here that the inquest was held. We shall abstain from dwelling on the fearful spectacle which met Mr. Broadway's eyes ; suffice it to say that the sight of the much disfigured form, with head and feet uncovered, and with hands tightly clenched, the white satin dress saturated and stained with muddy water—affected him so deeply that he could not restrain his tears.

By common consent of the domestics, who were fearful that the news might have a fatal effect on their master or mistress, the catastrophe had been carefully concealed from Sir Richard and his wife, and thus the family was represented by a person who was supposed, either directly or indirectly, to be accessory to the death of the deceased.

The too evident distress of poor Alice throughout the ceremony of the previous evening, had very naturally excited strong suspicions that the match had been forced upon her, and that unjustifiable means had been used by Constantine to attain his end. Strange stories were whispered concerning the cause of the Baronet's failing health, and the grasping spirit of the Agent was freely canvassed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that a very general feeling of exasperation began to be entertained against a man whose selfishness had probably cost a young and innocent person her reason and her life.

Constantine, however, either was, or at all events appeared to be, very much distressed. He was early on the spot, and had stated that he was himself in search of his wife, who had mysteriously disappeared during the night. He could not be induced to approach the body, and with tears implored to be excused from looking at it. Producing a letter in a female hand, for the inspection of the persons

assembled to inquire into the cause of the heartrending disaster, he proceeded, with many sighs, to explain his version of the matter. He stated that he and his bride had passed the night at the Raven's Nest, in consequence of his having returned too late from Newington to proceed any further, but that when he opened his eyes in the morning, she was no longer to be seen. "And now, gentlemen," continued he, applying a handkerchief to his eyes, "when you have perused the letter which I have placed in your hands, you will see that it is I, the bridegroom of yesterday and the widower of to-day, who am the real object of pity. A fair spirit has passed to her eternal rest, while I am doomed, like Cain, to be an outcast and a wanderer on the earth, with a curse upon my name and fire at my heart. Gentlemen, I have been the unconscious instrument of my wife's destruction—she loved another! would I had known it! Last night accident put her in possession of the fact, that a man whom she had believed

unfaithful, was on his way to claim her. That letter, which informs you of this fact, told me the secret which her lips concealed. Pity the misery which produced a temporary aberration of intellect, and caused my poor bride to commit the rash act—and return a charitable verdict.”

This speech being delivered with every mark of deep feeling, the widower sank into a chair, and appeared quite overcome.

The letter was inspected amidst the whispered comments of the jury; and, while it corroborated the remarks of Broadway, was considered conclusive. But it was necessary to put a few more questions, for it was not quite clear how the body of the deceased came to be so much torn and lacerated.

In a very delicate manner, Constantine was interrogated as to the particular way in which he supposed the poor young lady to have carried out her dreadful purpose. “Beyond a doubt, gentlemen,” was the weeping reply, “she

must have sprung from the window of my tower, which is fully sixty feet above a roaring torrent—for the door of my residence was locked.”

A shudder of horror went round the assembly, amongst which several inquisitive strangers had intruded themselves. This last piece of evidence on the part of the bereaved man cleared up everything, for in addition to the terrible concussion which the deceased must have received in falling from such a height upon the stony bed of a shallow river, the subsequent passage of the body—urged by rising floods, over a rocky channel, and torn and battered in its progress—fully accounted for the condition in which it had reached the Danish Pool.—“Never again,” said Constantine, in conclusion, “shall light enter that accursed window; at this moment workmen are employed in the task of building it up.”

While he was thus speaking a constable produced a stiletto, which he said had

been found near the bed in the apartment which had been occupied by Broadway and his wife.

It was afterwards recollected that Broadway seemed surprised at the discovery, although the circumstance was considered by the jury as corroborative of his testimony.

It is possible that in the minds of some, a parallel to the case of Lucy Ashton, in Scott's romance of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, may have been suggested.

The jury were about to consider their verdict, when two persons, who, concealed behind the rest, had listened unseen to the explanations of Broadway—suddenly confronted the latter, who made a movement of surprise when he saw De Maine and Winter.

“Before you conclude, gentlemen,” said Winter, with his accustomed coolness, “I have a few remarks to make. In the first place that man [here he pointed at Broadway, from whose eyes there then shot a momentary gleam of indignation and astonishment], that man, I

say, can forge hand-writing. If you'll listen to me a moment, I'll prove to you that there is a strong probability that the letter which he makes out to be from his deceased wife is only an ingenious composition of his own."

Broadway started up with clenched fists and blazing eyes; some policemen prepared to interfere to prevent a personal encounter—he recovered himself and sat down, regarding his antagonist with a countenance firmly set. Meanwhile attention was rivetted upon the accusing spirit, whose words had produced no small sensation.

"I must tell you then," resumed Winter, when permitted to proceed, "that he married the daughter of Sir Richard De Clare for her property. Last night, immediately after the ceremony had been performed, he went into Newington, and there learnt that a descendant of the elder branch of the family he had married into, was about to make good an irresistible claim, and reduce the present proprietor of Clare Hall to poverty."

The decision with which these words were spoken, and the statements made, produced an electric effect.

Winter had scarcely finished, when Constantine rising, and drawing himself up to his full height, said with calmness and gravity, "The person who has just given utterance to the infamous falsehoods which you have all heard, is not to be believed upon his oath; he is a detected swindler, who was kicked out of the army on account of cheating at cards, and turning his back on the enemy at Balaclava; he, and his associate there, keep a hell in London, and have lately been pursued by the police. Before I knew what they were I tolerated their society, but I have latterly avoided them altogether. Last night an anonymous letter, concocted by them, brought me into Newington at a late hour to hear this same story, which was trumped up for the sole purpose of extorting money from me."

This oration once more diverted the sympathies of the majority of the audience in

Constantine's favor. And the coroner, checking a reply which Winter was about to make, demanded rather sharply, "what proof he had to bring in support of the charge he had made."

"The facts prove it," returned the accuser; "the body of the deceased in the next room—the motives I have shewn—everything proves it. Keep that man in custody twenty-four hours, and I'll bring you other evidence besides."

"In order," interrupted Broadway, "that he may have time, gentlemen, to avoid the prison to which he will find himself presently committed, and escape the consequences which this attempt to blast my character might bring upon him if I chose to take notice of it. Perhaps he'll bring forward the corroborative testimony of that noted liar beside him, who, as everybody knows, lost his commission while in garrison at Newington, on account of having swindled the whole town by means of a ring of paste."

“ I never was in the army in my life,” returned the person alluded to. “ I am in the profession of the law, and everything Mr. Winter asserts, is as true as what you have said is false.”

De Maine’s appearance was familiar to some of those present, and in spite of the melancholy duty upon which they were there assembled, it was impossible to avoid a smile at what was considered the effrontery of the last speech.

Further examination of the charge brought by this pair was not considered necessary, and notwithstanding the loud expostulations of Winter—directed partly against his companion—he and *Chester* De Maine were pushed from the room, and a verdict was returned “ that the deceased had come to her death by drowning herself, while labouring under temporary insanity.”

CHAPTER XXV.

And doth not a meeting like this make amends
For all the long years we've been wand'ring away ?
MOORE.

THE news of the terrible discovery which had been made in the pool above the Danish bridge, had not yet reached Amalfi, and the young ladies of the family were amusing themselves in abusing the Newington people, and wishing themselves back at Brighton. There had been a small dance on the previous evening in celebration of the wedding, but the affair was in some degree blighted by the total absence of military guests. Little Selina had been much sought after, however, and perhaps enjoyed the festivities more than either of her sisters.

Several times, three or four suitors had simultaneously claimed her hand—for the dance, and she had asked the puzzling question of “What am I to do with you all?” The result of the severe duty which she had performed that night was evident in the morning, for at about eleven o’clock—breakfast having been just concluded—the little creature flung herself into an attitude on the ottoman, and declared she was “quite blasée.”

To the interesting conversation which was carried on in this apartment, Miss Winter was obliged to listen, and it curiously happened that on this particular morning the words “common dragoon” were several times mentioned, solely for the purpose of annoying her. They were in fact employing themselves in this way when carriage wheels were heard rolling up to the door. Not long afterwards a servant, without making any announcement, shewed in our friend Paul Bold. Neither the presence of the captious young ladies, nor any other consideration, served to restrain the

warmth of the reception accorded to a Balaclava hero. Nods and winks were exchanged among the spectators.

“What was that which drove up just now?” said Leonora, in a low tone.

“The carriage, I suppose,” said Clementina, “Ma’ is going out for an early drive.”

“No,” said Selina, “it was a post-chaise, and C. D. came in it.”

A few remarks from Paul Bold had enabled the young ladies to guess his identity, though they could not help being struck by his appearance, which did not at all correspond to their preconceived notions of Miss Winter’s mean correspondent. “I suppose,” whispered Leonora, “Miss Winter’s beau has been made a Quarter-master.” “Or has purchased his discharge as a sergeant,” suggested Clementina.

Just then Mrs. Broadway entered the room; she looked inquiringly from the governess to the stranger, and from the stranger to the go-

verness, as she said, "I think a—that I have not the honor of a—"

"The *a-hem*, Mamma," remarked one of the daughters, with a significant look.

"Mr. Paul Bold, Mrs. Broadway," said Miss Winter, by way of an introduction, which Mrs. Broadway's interrogative manner seemed to demand. A mere shadow of an inclination answered the obeisance of Paul. "You may have leave for the day, Miss Winter," added the lady sharply.

It was only too evident that Mrs. Broadway considered the "common dragoon" unfit society for her daughters, though, like her daughters, she could not help remarking that his appearance was not that of an ordinary private.

"My sister is waiting to receive you," said Paul, addressing Miss Winter, "you must excuse her for not coming in here. Get your bonnet on and we will send for your things afterwards; I have something to tell you

which will surprise you. As quick as you can, Ellen; I shall wait for you here."

Miss Winter immediately left the room. Mrs. Broadway seemed on the point of suggesting that the "common dragoon" had better wait outside in the hall; she restrained her wrath, however, and sat down without offering a chair to her visitor, who remained standing. At length she said, "From a recent remark of yours just now, Mr. a—, Mr. a—"

"*Sergeant* Bold is his name, Mamma, and not Mr." interrupted Selina, with emphasis.

"Never mind, my dear, what it is," said her mother. "From a recent remark of yours, Sir, I infer that you propose taking my governess away from her duties for several days. I think you might have first asked her employer's permission."

Paul Bold seemed as though he heard not; he remained standing, hat in hand, looking steadfastly towards the window. Miss Win-

ter entered just as Mrs. Broadway rose indignantly—

“ I cannot permit my governess to depart,” she said, “ except on the understanding that she returns this evening. Because I took her upon charity, that is no reason why I am to permit her to desert her duties for an unlimited period, under the wing of a person of whom I know nothing further, than that the humble rank which he holds in the British army scarcely warrants his intrusion into my drawing-room.”

“ You may spare your eloquence, Madam,” interrupted Paul Bold, offering his arm to Miss Winter, “ and keep your charity for those who ask it. The zeal which you pretend for the welfare of this young lady, would have been better displayed in protecting her from insult and annoyance while under your roof. As to my intrusion into this room, amongst ladies, who, though very fashionable, are not above reading the correspondence of a poor governess—I shall offer no apology. As a

Sergeant of Dragoons I might not be worthy of the high privilege : but where the title of Marquis (though unsupported) has been considered a passport to honor, perhaps the Earl of Glenmore may claim the right of entering for the purpose of withdrawing from your care a person whom he intends to make his wife."

So saying, Paul Bold (now no longer a "common dragoon," but a peer of the realm, with a large income—for death having successively removed three intervening heirs in the course of as many months, had secured to him the unexpected succession), made a ceremonious bow, and led the future Countess out of the room, leaving Mrs. Broadway and her daughters in a state of surprise and confusion, which this unexpected intelligence was well calculated to produce.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Where is that viper? bring the villain forth!"

OTHELLO.

THOUGH not unfavorably regarded by the jury, Constantine could scarcely expect sympathy at the hands of the indiscriminating concourse without; who, in ignorance of the light his statement had thrown upon the horrible event which had taken place, were left to put their own construction upon it. On making his way through the crowd, after leaving the cottage where the inquest had been held, dark looks were turned on him, and, though his retreat was not intercepted, he, no doubt, plainly heard the muttered remarks to

his disadvantage, which gradually swelled into a groan of disapprobation and abhorrence, before he had gone a stone's cast from the indignant assemblage.

It is indeed surprising, that he was permitted to pass unmolested, as it was evident from the exasperation of the crowd, that any signal for attack upon a person so unpopular, would have been followed up immediately. At the suggestion of Constantine, and by warrant from Mr. Broadway, Winter and De Maine were taken into custody, but the former contrived to enlist the sympathies of the mob, and was rescued. And when his version of the story became known, their fierce rage could no longer be controlled. The gentle and engaging character, no less than the youth and singular beauty of the Baronet's daughter, had prepossessed a wide circle of neighbours belonging to a more humble class of life in her favour. Her frank, pleasant, and unassuming manner towards her inferiors, as well as her innocent gaiety and pretty ways,

were now sadly and deeply thought of; and while the tragic story of her miserable fate drew tears from the eyes of some,—tender sentiments soon gave place to the darker and fiercer feelings which carried away the rest. The verdict gave no manner of satisfaction, and the conduct of the magistrates was censured in unmeasured terms; the perpetrator of a fiendish murder had eluded the clutches of the law. It remained to be seen whether he could escape the vengeance of the mob!

Sunk in gloomy abstraction, Constantine proceeded from the scene of the inquest towards the Raven's Nest. Entering the postern gate, he stopped at the door of the Hall to ask a question, but, though he knocked repeatedly, no answer was returned, and with a darker shade of thought upon his countenance, he turned away; and presently afterwards reached the old tower, only to find it completely deserted; he called, but no response came; he climbed to the garret, it was empty; he descended into the kitchen, the fire was extin-

guished, and the old crone, who filled the office of cook in his establishment, had departed; he visited the stable, which was at some little distance from the tower, his horses were there, his groom was not to be found. He returned to his apartment where his directions concerning the blocking up of the window had been carried out, and after ruminating for several hours, began to busy himself in making preparations for a departure and temporary absence from a neighbourhood, where his complicated schemes of self-aggrandizement, though cunningly devised, and unscrupulously carried out, appeared to have met with signal defeat.

When it was quite dark, this wicked man, after having written several letters to explain his absence—one of which was to his father concerning the funeral of the deceased—proceeded to the stable, and putting harness on one of the horses, returned once more to the old tower, and flung himself on a couch, with the intention of starting before dawn, and

driving to a station on the London and Newington Railway, where his appearance would not be likely to excite comment or suspicion.

It was about midnight, when, after tossing restlessly for an hour, during which his mind was occupied by thoughts of the crimes he had committed, without obtaining the object in view, he cursed the associates, who had betrayed him, and fell asleep.

The torrent roaring down the lonely glen, sent up a wild and angry murmur through the dark night. It fell faintly on the ears of the sleeping man, who, in his dreams fancied he heard the wailing voice of a hapless victim calling in vain for pity, mingling with the hoarse laughter of fiends.

He awoke after a feverish start, and with cold dew upon his forehead. The little casement was open; he rose blaspheming, slammed it to, and again composed himself to slumber; his lower jaw relaxed; his breathing became hard, and he dreamt again. And now it was solemn silence, and he was sitting on a lofty

black throne, with shadowy robe ; and hideous spectres crowded round with humble grimace, though they seemed to be mocking him. Meanwhile, long funeral processions with sombre nodding plumes, went crowding past. He shook his fist at the vast assembly, upon which every finger was pointed at him, and he perceived that his hands were covered with blood. Suddenly the scene changed—he was hammering the lid of a coffin with mighty strokes, which resounded far and wide, but there was something within which defied his efforts, bursting furiously up as soon as the nails were firmly rivetted, while groans and shouts seemed to mock the useless toil.

Louder and louder grew the knocking and the uproar, when with a start he once more opened his eyes ; this time there was real cause for alarm. The old tower was besieged by a furious mob, who were thundering at the door for admittance.

There were few bolder men than Constantine, but conscious guilt suggested the probable

purpose of this nightly visit to his lonely tower, and for once in his lifetime he trembled.

“Open the door, you bloody-fingered scoundrel! Open the door, murderer and liar!” shouted the angry voices without. Broadway returned no answer, but groped in the dark chamber for his pistols which he knew were ready loaded. The voices continued, while he stood for a moment irresolute.

The next instant the outside door was burst in with a crash,—Broadway rushing up the ladder staircase into the loft, and retiring to a far corner, cocked his pistols, and awaited in silence the approach of the enemy, with the determination of relinquishing his life as dearly as possible.

A search was made in the apartment he had just quitted, and muttered questions and answers took the place of the shouts and yells which had previously been heard. Two men, one of whom held a stable lantern, now ascending the ladder, peered into the loft.

The finger was on the trigger, and in

another instant both these men would have paid the penalty of their daring, but Constantine suddenly checked his fire at the very last moment, for he perceived that they had failed to detect his presence.

"Is he there?" said a voice from below, "No," was the reply of the man with the lantern, as he descended, "He must be concealed somewhere here then, for the bed here is warm," remarked the first speaker,—“Let us search below.” Broadway heard them departing, but he durst not yet emerge from his hiding place.

It is needless to say that the inquisitors found nobody in the apartment on the ground floor, which was only used as a place for storing fuel, or in the vault beneath which served as a kitchen.

"The villain has escaped us I fear," said the person who acted as a ringleader, "But whether or not, we'll burn his nest for him, set fire to these piles of wood."

The space immediately beneath the apart-

ments, from one of which Broadway had retreated, being used as a fuel store, was almost filled with combustible materials, which being dry were soon in a blaze. The cold air rushed in from the open doorway, and shouts and yells from the crowd hailed the commencement of the conflagration; meantime Constantine had let fall the trap door, thus closing all communication with the apartments below, and hastily piling upon the spot some lumber which the room contained, conceived himself perfectly secure.

It was some time before a smell of fire reaching the garret, informed him of the new danger which menaced him.

Discarding one of the weapons, he hurried from his hiding place tightly grasping the other, with the intention of fighting his way thro' the crowd, but on reaching the room he had quitted on the first alarm, he found it so full of smoke that respiration was almost impossible, and gasping for air and blinded by the pungent vapour, he groped for the window.

In the first attempt his hand met the new stone work and moist mortar—Ugh! it was the window which had that day been built up by his orders. The flames roared louder and louder, and the floor trembled beneath his feet. Almost suffocated he burst into an adjoining room, and failing to reach the door which led to the stairs, arrived gasping for air at a low window, which, divided by three stone shafts, was situated nearly above the entrance to the tower.

Meanwhile the mob looked on sullenly, some collected inside the park, beneath the casement which commanded a view of the hall, but by far the greater portion watched that side of the tower which was the only practicable one for an escape.

A strong glare shone from this doorway, unbering the faces of the excited spectators, while the red flickering haze seen through the windows above, shewed that the flame which grew momentarily brighter, had begun to penetrate the upper rooms of the building.

Suddenly a dark object intervened, and the next instant pieces of broken glass fell among the crowd, and a human figure, apparently blackened with smoke, seemed as if endeavouring to writhe out between the stone mullions. A cry of mingled execration and horror rose from the crowd. It was answered by a shout of defiance.

At this moment two men came running up with a ladder which had been sent for, to gain the window in the event of its being impossible to burst in the door.

“Surrender at discretion and confess your crimes!” shouted a voice as the ladder was placed at the foot of the window, where Broadway vainly strove with desperate energy to force a passage between the stone shafts. The report of a pistol was the only reply, and Winter fell dead.

The crowd made a backward movement as three or four random shots were fired in amongst them by the same hand.

“Let him burn and be d—d to him!” said

one of the men who had brought the means of escape.

So saying he dashed the ladder to the ground, and almost at the same instant, the upper flooring gave way, a flame seven fold more vivid shot up, forked tongues of fire darted out from between the stone mullions, and Broadway disappeared for ever.

Not long afterwards the roof fell in with a thundering noise, and from the shell of the old tower a blaze burst forth which was seen for many miles.

The glen, with its trees and rocks, as well as the old hall, caught the lurid light. But ere the funeral pyre attained its full grandeur, the terrified crowd had retreated from a scene of horror never to be forgotten.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Cavalcando l'altr'ier per un cammino,
Pensoso dell'andar che mi sgradia ;
Trovai l'amor in mezzo della via,
In abito leggier di pellegrino.

DANTE.

Is there no real exorcist,
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes ;
Is't real that I see ?

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

ONE still autumn day—some time after the occurrences related in the foregoing chapters—St. Vincent, now recovered from his feverish attack, sat alone in the old drawing-room at Clare Hall.

The windows were partially open, render-

ing the noise of the stream distinctly audible. The season of the year, and the weather, as well as other circumstances tended to remind the visitor of his last interview with one fondly loved. He had now come by request to bid a final adieu to his dear friends, and when we remember all that had lately occurred, can we wonder that a shade of deep dejection was on his countenance? There was her old accustomed seat by the fireside. Her guitar lay idly in a corner, of the apartment where her sweet voice had once waked the lay, and where her merry little laugh had so often echoed of yore. Is the dream gone for ever? Is there no pity in the skies? Can no power—no talisman recall that sweet shade to life? We hear the sad murmur of the river, and we pause to think of the past.

Suddenly a light footstep moves across the oak floor of the hall. The young man starts up. Can the grave surrender its victim? Does St. Vincent dream? or has the dark King

of Terrors, touched by the lament of an Orpheus, restored Eurydice to his arms?

Before we pretend to answer these questions we must request that inexorable autocrat Old Time to reverse the golden wheels of his chariot.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Bear with me, I am hungry for revenge!

SHAKESPEARE.

IN a mean apartment in an obscure part of London, the night previous to the marriage which took place at St. Mary's—a person, whom we have met under the name of the Contessa di Fageoli—sat in close conversation with the daughter of the post-mistress of Newington.

“I tell you,” said Rose, “that the name of the one is Broadway—Constantine Broadway—whom you suppose to be dead—and the other is Miss De Clare, of Clare Hall, Newington. There's the address and names of

both; and as sure as I sit here, and you sit there before me, this marriage will come off to morrow; and I am to be lady's maid to the dainty minx."

The Contessa, who was smoking, emitted several puffs in quick succession, and then threw her cigarette into the fire-place. She rose, and walked about the room. Her eyes were luminous with wrath and excitement, as after the lapse of a few moments she stopped short and confronted Rose, who eagerly marked her look and manner, and appeared to derive a sort of savage pleasure from the contemplation.

"Hear," said the Contessa, "how he has treated me. I met him at Naples, where I passed for Lady Mortimer, widow of—no matter whom—it was not my name—but that's not the question—he thought it was, and he married me. I was believed to be rich, and I had a good deal, for an old gentleman I knew had died, and left me all he had. I gave it all to this Broadway, for I liked him

then as much as I hate him now. We were married privately.—What? my hand? Oh! no, he didn't find that out till after. It was always tied up, and I said it was broken. He brought me to England, and kept me concealed in London; but when he began to find out that I had not as much money as he expected, and that he couldn't discover my relations, he talked about casting me off. He had beaten me before this, but that didn't cure me until I began to see that he wanted to be rid of me altogether.

“It was then I lost all fondness for him; but I swore to myself that I would make him live with me whatever happened. I had proofs of my marriage, and was going to law to make him support me; but when he saw what I was up to, he pretended to come round all of a sudden, and, like a fool, I believed him, and gave in.

“We went on for a few weeks in the old way, and he seemed to get fonder and fonder, when one morning he comes in, and says he,

‘We’re ruined for ever! I havn’t a penny left, and there’s nothing but a prison for us both to-morrow. The fact is,’ says he, after hesitating a moment, ‘I have passed a cheque for £800, and it has been found——what do you think has been found?’ says he. ‘What?’ says I. ‘That I forged the name to it.’ You may think how I was taken aback at this.

“‘One thing will save us, and only one,’ says he, ‘and if you have the courage to do it, we will bolt to America at once.’ I told him I would stick at nothing. He then took me in his arms, and called me all manner of fond names, the black villain! he did; and pulling out a cheque with a woman’s signature to it, asked me to fill up for a large sum a blank one which he had, and to forge the name at the bottom. I sat down to do it that minute, and he looked over me till I was done—for it was a hard job for me, that never was much of a scholar; and then says he, ‘There’s one thing more to be done.’ ‘Name it,’ says I,

‘and whatever it is I’ll do it.’ ‘Well,’ says he, ‘just go to C——’s bank, in Lombard Street—you see the name on the cheque)—and get it cashed. I’ll wait for you at the fruit shop at the corner of the Poultry, and when the job’s done, we’ll change our clothes and go off to Liverpool this very night.’

“Ninny that I was! I knew nothing about banks and such like, and no sooner had I presented the cheque than I found myself in the hands of the police; but it wasn’t till I was brought up for examination that I found out the game this cursed Broadway was playing. It would drive me mad to tell you all about the trial that came off afterwards, and how the —— turning evidence against me himself, swore that I was not his wife—having taken care first to rob me of whatever proofs I possessed of my marriage—(though I have since found one), and did his best to get me transported. It’s enough to say, that my explanation wasn’t believed, and

I was sent across the water for seven years, and I would have been there now if I had not escaped—”

“With an Italian Count,” said Rose, suddenly interrupting her.

The Contessa looked surprised. “How did you know that?” said she.

“I cannot tell you just now,” replied Rose, “but I will tell you some day. Did you ever know,” she added, “that before you received the pardon—”

“What pardon? I never received a pardon,” interrupted the other. “If I had, I would have been here before this.”

“You did receive a pardon,” asserted Rose; “at least, the pardon was despatched, and just before that, this very Italian Count was sent out to make all safe, and murder you.”

There was a pause, during which the Contessa regarded her companion with astonishment.

“What! that snivelling fool sent out to

murder me? Ha! ha! a likely thing! And who sent him?"

"As sure as Gospel, and some day I'll prove it to you in black and white," replied Rose; "*your own husband, this Constantine Broadway, sent him.* Your friend, the Count, told Broadway you were dead, and at the same time your death appeared in the papers. They have written letters in foreign lingos back and forwards often since that. It was on Broadway's business you went to Malta, and the officer you were to kidnap, so as to be *late* for the ship (you remember?) was the young man that wanted to marry Miss De Clare."

The Contessa did not say another word upon these matters, but seemed, by an effort, to swallow her fierce resentment, and with an air of forced calmness began to inquire the shortest and most expeditious route to Newington.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend from jealousy.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHILE Rose, as just detailed, was occupied with business on her own account, her mother, the Jewess, who knew a great many more facts about the Contessa than she chose to communicate to her daughter, was talking to Winter in a house not far distant.

"Next to keeping our principal in ignorance of the secret of her history," said Winter, "the grand point is to keep it from every body else. You have not of course told anything of these matters to Rose?"

"Not a word," returned the Jewess, "ex-

cept what I thought she would like to know, and that is, that the Contessa, as she calls herself, is the wife of Constantine Broadway."

"And why did you tell her that?" demanded Winter, in a discontented tone.

"Oh, never fear her," said the Jewess, "she'll keep it as dark as you please."

"That may be," returned the other, "but let me tell you, I know that Rose is devilish sore about Broadway, and I think you have acted foolishly; she might set on the Contessa to do something against Miss De Clare, of whom you know she must naturally be jealous. Did Rose come up to town with you?"

"No," said the Jewess, lying deliberately, for imagining that no interview could take place between the Contessa and her daughter, she thought it useless to inform Winter that she had brought Rose up to town with her, for the purpose of obtaining a legal opinion as to the propriety of commencing an action against Broadway for breach of promise of marriage.

"The only way to do the business," re-

sumed Ralph, "is to let our friend marry Sir Richard's daughter, and then we have him, for his first wife won't have anything to say to him after that, and besides having him up for bigamy, she'll prove a strong case of cruelty and desertion. Broadway will not get a halfpenny out of her, and you and I, old girl, will share the profits. I suppose you don't object to the little bit of revenge you will enjoy when a certain Baronet discovers that he will lose all his property, though he has been in possession eighteen years?"

"No," replied the Jewess, with a vindictive look, "I hate the whole stock of them, root and branch. But tell me," she added. "do you think Sir Richard will last very long, they say he is dying?"

"Who told you that?" inquired Winter.

"A little bird," answered the old lady.

"Only fancy now," said Winter laughing, "that a woman like you should carry spite so long. I'll tell you what, mistress, I've helped

you to your revenge, and you must do a trifle for me in return."

"What do you mean?" said his companion.

"It is not very much," returned Winter, "only to give me Rose for my wife, as soon as this business is settled."

"She wouldn't take you," said the Jewess.

It is probable that Winter was not serious in the proposal which he made, and that he at this moment contemplated a matrimonial alliance in another quarter, which the reader may guess.

"Tell me," asked the Jewess, "what do they say about our chances of success?"

"You mean *Miss Blanche De Clare's* chances," said Winter, "for we may as well drop the Mrs. Broadway."

"Well, it's all the same," replied the Jewess, with a villanous look: "what's hers is ours, isn't it?"

"As to chances," replied Winter, "there are no chances at all, but a dead certainty."

“And what do they think is the strongest point in our chain of evidence?”

“The strongest point of all,” said Winter, slowly and decisively, “is, *that the real heiress has web fingers.*”

Across the faded countenance of the Jewess there flitted a ghastly smile of malice, and she began to ponder over things which had occurred in days long gone by.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive."

SCOTT.

SIR RICHARD DE CLARE's elder brother was often in want of money. His habits were extravagant; and when other resources were exhausted, he occasionally had recourse to the Jews. At the house of one old money-lender in particular, who lived in the metropolis, Sir Gilbert was frequently seen; for here he had obtained, previous to succeeding to his title and property, large sums, which were lavished in the most prodigal manner. The wily Israelite had prepared a bait to allure the spendthrift. This bait was beauty. Two

fair damsels of Hebrew origin, but converts to the Roman Catholic faith—ignorant, uneducated, yet seductive in their manners—did the honors of the usurer's establishment. Sir Gilbert appeared to regard them with divided admiration, and they on the other hand seemed to view him with equal favour. Sir Gilbert ended in making one his wife, and by doing so made an implacable enemy of the other, who immediately afterwards married a tobacconist.

The tobacconist's wife became the mother of a girl, and very soon afterwards the lady of Sir Gilbert presented him with a daughter. It was then that the disappointed woman conceived a project of revenge. She attended her former companion and rival in her confinement (which was followed by fatal results to the lady), and found means to abstract the daughter of the deceased, and to place her own in the cradle. A peculiar deformity had been noticed in the newly-born infant at the moment of its birth, and it

excited some surprise when, on examination a few weeks afterwards, slight scars on the thumb and fingers of the infant—apparently produced by the application of caustic—seemed to mark the remains of the distinguishing trait. The supposed friend, who had taken exclusive charge of the baronet's offspring, pretended to account for the wonderful change, by ascribing it to bandages and treatment, and it is supposed that she influenced the baronet, for the affair, at his request, had been hushed up, and the changeling was ever afterwards regarded as the daughter of Sir Gilbert (though curiously enough a will made just before his decease in 1837, 'devised' and 'bequeathed' all Sir Gilbert's 'real' and 'personal' property to Blanche De Clare, provided that the said Blanche be found to have the finger of the right hand connected by a web.)

A few years later, the baronet absconded to America, taking with him his reputed daughter and another man's wife; but Sir Gilbert's retreat near Baltimore being after-

wards discovered, he was shot, in a duel, by the injured husband. Sir Gilbert's reputed child had not survived him, and Sir Richard De Clare succeeded to his brother's property and title. But it was afterwards suspected that the tobacconist and his wife had proceeded to Baltimore shortly after the death of Sir Gilbert, and had contrived to possess themselves of some of the personal effects of the deceased, including letters and other documents. The tobacconist's wife had exulted in the thought that while her own daughter was being reared in luxury under the roof of Sir Gilbert, the real child of the latter was subjected to very different treatment. Sir Gilbert's daughter was at first put out to nurse in a metropolitan suburb. What particular trade she was apprenticed to when she grew up it matters not to mention; certain it is she learned nothing which could do her any good, and the tobacconist's wife promised herself the fiendish pleasure of one day informing Sir Gilbert of the neglected state of

his child. But although the Jewess was in the first instance influenced by resentment, there is no doubt she soon cherished the idea of turning her cruel trick to a profitable account. Had not the daughter of Sir Gilbert suddenly disappeared just about the period of her father's death, an heir-at-law would certainly have disputed the property to which Sir Richard quietly succeeded, for only a very insignificant portion of the estate accompanied the title.

About the date of the commencement of our narrative, the Jewess, with her husband and second daughter, Rose, came to Newington, and were presently established at the post-office, through the agency of Broadway, who flattered the old Jewess by his polite attention to her daughter.

It is possible that Constantine, who had sent De Maine, Winter, and the German count on various little excursions to collect evidence of facts which he was anxious to prove, may have suspected the mother of Rose of knowing

something of the history of the family of his employer. She took good care, however, to communicate nothing of importance; but when she perceived that Miss De Clare, and not her daughter, was the real object of Broadway's attentions, she was induced to hint a secret to Winter, who had met a certain Contessa di Fageoli abroad, and now began to suspect that she was the daughter of Sir Gilbert De Clare, as well as the wife of Constantine. It is sufficient for our purpose to state that, at the instance of Winter (who had found Sir Gilbert's will amongst the documents which the Jewess had brought from Baltimore), the Contessa was brought to London, in ignorance of the precise object which required her presence. Fraudulent designs are, however, sometimes defeated by the very cunning which promises success.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes.”

SHAKESPEARE.

ROSE had disappeared but a short time from the Raven's Nest, when the door, in which she had turned the key on the outside, was suddenly unlocked, and a woman about Alice's own height, attired in a dark dress, and closely veiled,—after a moment's survey of the room and its sole occupant—entered. She had already seated herself on a French bed, with white muslin hangings, ere the unhappy bride, absorbed in her own hopeless misery, was aware of her presence. After a pause, during which the visitor, remaining

perfectly motionless, seemed to be studying the appearance of the unfortunate young lady, the latter rising to her feet put a question as to the purport of the visit.

There was no reply, and the stranger continuing motionless as before, the query was repeated. Still no answer, though it appeared as if the veiled woman was convulsed by some strong inward emotion.

A vague idea dawned upon Alice that the person before her was in some way connected with Constantine.

"You seem unhappy," said she, as she dried her own tears; "may I ask the cause?"

To the astonishment—we might say—to the consternation of the sympathizing enquirer, a chuckling noise, becoming louder as it continued, betrayed a keen relish of some facetious idea, which, considering the too-evident misery of the mistress of the lonely tower, was strangely out of place.

Alice was at a loss whether to attribute such singular behaviour to the vagaries

of insanity, or to the influence of alcohol, as her mysterious visitor burst into a prolonged peal of half-hysterical laughter. "And so," said a voice from behind the veil, when the laughter had subsided, and the speaker appeared to be surveying the pictures on the walls—many of them water-colors by Sir Richard—and the handsome furniture of the comfortable apartment. "So—this is *his* room!—and *this*," she added, turning her veiled face towards the person addressed, "is his *wife*."

Peculiarities of manner were now forgotten, and suspicion was fast merging into certainty, as Alice, stammered out, "Can it be possible that you are—that it is—that you know anything about Mr. —, about my—"

"Do I know *what*?" interrupted the other, with hard ringing emphasis, contrasting forcibly with former merriment, while she rose and approached the bride. "I'll tell you what I do know. Look at that, and that, and read this."

So saying, she successively placed on the table a miniature, a wedding ring, which she drew from her finger, and lastly a slip of paper, which informed Alice of a prior claim upon her husband.

“Look at the portrait,” said Mrs. Broadway the first. “Handsome, isn’t it? I painted it myself. He was younger then. You can examine that ring, too; he placed it on my finger—and when you have done reading that paper, perhaps you’ll tell me whether you think two wives could live in one house? Your marriage won’t hold. So much the better for you. He only wants your money. I am not come back empty-handed, though I have been so long away. Now I want to do everything friendly; so to save the trouble of going to law, you may as well give up all claim to Broadway at once; and as I want to give him a pleasant surprise, if you are agreeable, you may prove that you are so, by taking off that wedding dress (for you are like

me, and I shall easily pass for you), and by leaving my house directly."

Here her voice grew louder and her manner more excited, and Alice turning her eyes from the miniature which she had been examining, was horrified to perceive that the right hand of the woman, expanding like a fan, or the wing of a bat, displayed a monstrous deformity, while she vociferated—

"I would go through fire and water for him, and that's more than you would do."

All this time the wondering Alice held in her hands the important document before alluded to, and the rival evidently supposing she wished to detain it, suddenly tearing off her bonnet and veil, and flinging them on the floor, disclosed a harsh and angry likeness of our heroine, and said, or rather shrieked—
"Give me back my certificate! Take off your gown! and leave my house at once, unless," she added, "you wish to FIGHT for a man you have no right to."

While uttering the last sentence, the daughter of Sir Gilbert De Clare, snatching the written paper, suddenly flashed out a knife, which she had hitherto kept concealed, with a motion so fiercely vindictive, that the menace would have sent a cold shiver through the most stoically indifferent of spectators.

Perhaps in a cause where her softer feelings were concerned, the spirit of a descendant of the De Clare, who signed his name at Runnymede, might have supported our heroine, under circumstances yet more appalling. But the perjured villain claimed by another, had no place in her heart. She obeyed the imperious mandate of her cousin, and divested herself of a costume she hated.

When the transfer was completed, the person who had so unexpectedly assumed the title of Mrs. Constantine Broadway, regarded herself in a cheval glass, and once more burst into a peal of laughter.

Left to herself, she was soon busily employed in removing all means of procuring a

light, in order that the interview which she intended to have with the expected bridegroom might be held in complete obscurity.

When all her preparations had been made, without removing the clothes which she had just assumed, she flung herself upon the couch, which occupied a corner of the apartment, and once more tightly clutching her murderous weapon, listened for a foot fall, which she expected would ere long disturb the silence of the dark and lonely dwelling.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
And in the upshot purposes mistook,
Fall'n on th' inventor's head—all this can I
Truly deliver.

HAMLET.

WE may well believe that the scared bride did not hesitate to obey an order to depart. Dreading to encounter her now disputed husband, who would probably return by the avenue road, she sought a darker path through the glen, where she passed, unconsciously, quite close to St. Vincent, who, in his fevered state supposed her to be a being from another world. In the confusion incident to a wedding, the servants had left the hall door open. Alice, therefore, reached, unperceived, her mother's

room, and when they had talked over the shocking disclosure which had just been made under such appalling circumstances, they resolved to keep the matter a profound secret. To carry out this plan—the presence of Alice in her father's house was concealed from the servants, who next morning withheld from their mistress the supposed death of her daughter. Most opportune in one respect was the arrival of Alice; Lady de Clare was on the point of administering a remedy (!) provided by Broadway, which was intended to put a sudden termination to the “lingering illness” which had for several months affected the Baronet, and thus Sir Richard was saved from death, and his wife from the remorse of having been the guiltless instrument of his destruction.

Our readers must now be fully satisfied as to the personal safety of our heroine. We have a few words to say respecting the deceased bridegroom.

It was with truth that Winter had remarked,

that in marrying Miss de Clare, Broadway had committed a most foolish act. A period of only six years having elapsed since the last news of Mrs. Broadway—a second marriage would, on her re-appearance, render him liable to the penalties of bigamy; and the clever villain must have perceived that he had ingeniously contrived a complicated scheme, fraught with perdition to himself; for the bride recently obtained with so much pains, and by so many falsehoods, would not have a penny—nay, worse,—would involve him in inextricable ruin. So long as the second wife lived, no arts could conciliate the real heiress, who now would have the power and the means of gratifying those feelings of revenge and hatred which had been so deeply and justly excited. The simplest solution of the difficulty, was the murder of an innocent person, whom, in his blind, selfish rage, he looked upon as the proximate cause of his impending ruin, and whom he detested on account of her preference for another; and we must admit, that his pro-

ject of evading detection by a new deceit—that of proving a suicide—was plausible enough, inasmuch as we have seen that it imposed upon a jury. Though we have no means of ascertaining the fact, there is a strong probability that, trusting to regain his old ascendancy, he had fully intended to have made his peace with the real heiress, in the hope of still grasping the De Clare property, which he expected would have slipped undiminished and unimpaired from the dead fingers of his patron, the very night upon which the daughter of the latter became a bride.

The particulars of the tragedy at the Raven's Nest remain shrouded in mystery; the vengeful wretch, who became herself the victim, may have been overtaken by sleep, assisted by intemperance; or, Broadway, aided by the darkness, which suited his purpose equally well, may have been too sudden in the perpetration of his mistaken deed. We have before noticed a sort of resemblance of form and feature in the cousins—fair complexion,

blue eyes, silken hair of golden brown, and light symmetrical figure, were however all that they possessed in common, for their characters were widely different. An unsightly peculiarity discovered in the right hand of a corpse, shewed how futile had been the last terrible falsehood and forgery which the crafty villain had invented. The explanation of Broadway; the dress of the disfigured remains found in the Dane's Pool; as well as several other circumstances, prevented any scepticism as to the person of the murdered woman. It was not till people learned that Alice was alive and safe at her father's house, that the body was more closely examined, and the strange, sad fact brought to light that a poor, forlorn outcast—from her birth the unconscious object of sordid and malignant designs—deceived, abandoned, frenzied by cruelty, and sent to a distant shore to die—had returned to perish by the very hand which she might have loaded with benefits. It was the burning of the old tower which led

to the discovery of Alice's safety, too late to avert the fate of Broadway, or reserve him for the legal consequences of his acts. The next morning brought enquiries after the missing heiress, and an investigation was entered into concerning various circumstances. An inquest sat upon the body of Winter, but the persons composing the illegal assemblage, which had been led on by Winter, to make a prisoner of Broadway, (for Winter expected to have been a gainer by his destruction,) and who had finally set fire to the dwelling, could never be discovered, for nobody would come forward to criminate the rest. The death of Sir Gilbert's daughter being satisfactorily authenticated, the projected lawsuit of course fell to the ground.

The Jewess and her daughter, Rose, are supposed to have quitted the kingdom. No doubt their conduct would otherwise have been investigated, and they would certainly have been called to account for their transactions at the post office. The reader will, ere this, have guessed by what agencies the

letters of St. Vincent were intercepted, and on one occasion returned to him, addressed in a hand resembling that of Miss De Clare. We cannot discover whether a letter, signed by Sir Richard De Clare, which reached St. Vincent on his arrival in the Crimea, was genuine or not.

With regard to one portion of the singular web—which Broadway having woven, became himself entangled in—we may as well state that Leger De Maine, becoming alarmed at the proceedings of Broadway and Winter, got his twin brother to represent him at the interview between the contending powers, with the view of making his own terms of escape from the triumvirate. Upon hearing of the supposed murder of Alice, he recommended his brother to proceed to give evidence against Broadway, with what result we have already seen.

Through the instrumentality of the Earl of Glenmore and his *fiancée*, St. Vincent and Alice became mutually informed of each

other's safety, and of the various events which had happened since the two lovers parted. It was not, however, until St. Vincent had recovered from his attack of fever, that Alice was permitted to know of his arrival in England. His first visit to Clare Hall took place some few weeks after the events which have been the subject of our investigations.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

All yet seems well ; and if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

ST. VINCENT had written a letter stating that "as he had returned from the Crimea in a maimed condition, he was now only an object of pity, and quite unfitted to be the husband of one who had accepted him in his more fortunate days; he would, therefore," he said, "release Sir Richard's daughter from her promise. He begged her to consider herself henceforth free, and to endeavour to forget one, who, though for ever separated, would never cease to pray for her happiness."

This letter had scarcely been three hours

despatched, when there arrived a brief note from Lady De Clare, insisting that he should come in person to take leave of them, as they had no idea of parting with an old friend, without having the satisfaction of seeing him at all events.

Early in these pages, as the reader may remember, we have described our hero as finding it rather difficult to decline invitations. It appears that his trip to the Crimea had not cured him of this failing, for we have already related that one still Autumn day found him seated in the old drawing-room at Clare Hall, although he had that morning packed his portmanteau at the 'Steeplechase Arms,' and consulted Bradshaw about the departure of the trains from the Newington Railway Station. We have, perhaps, according to the opinion of some of our readers, lingered often enough and long enough on the road between the manufacturing town and the enchanted castle. All things have an end, and our rides and drives to Clare Hall are probably concluded. We must

state, however, that by the time St. Vincent passed the Dane's Pool and waterfall, the Priory, the Monk's gate, the Church, the Park, the rustic bridge, the glen, the avenue, and heard the rooks cawing, and glanced at the fir trees, which marked the locality of the terrace—a host of memories had crowded upon him, and he sighed as he thought of his missing left arm, though, perhaps, his violin was at that moment forgotten.

But we must not delay, for the little feet hurrying rapidly across the hall, shewed that somebody at least was impatient to see a 'Crimean Hero!' Alice, with cheek something paler, and form a little reduced by the suffering and anxiety which she had undergone since the Adjutant had parted with her on the terrace, came quickly into the room. How did St. Vincent's philosophy support him at so trying a moment, and what became of his determination to tear himself away from that queen of love and beauty? He did not prove himself a stoic, and the beautiful girl,

who seemed to have caught a ray of Heaven in her face, did not give his stern resolution the least support.

With passionate exclamations they met, nor did Alice shun the soldier's embrace, though he had but one arm to clasp her with. But the sight of that coat-sleeve, soidly hanging from the button-hole of his coat, had been far too much for her.

She tried in vain to restrain tears, unsuited to such a meeting, as she said, pressing her lover to her bosom :

"How could you think that I would leave you? Oh! if you had ten thousand wounds, could that alter my love? No—no—these arms should receive you—here, here should be your welcome, so long as this dear form contained my Arthur's heart."

And thus was St. Vincent's letter answered.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Benedick.—"I will leave you now to your gossiping humours."
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

SIR RICHARD DE CLARE slowly recovered from the effects of homeopathic (!) treatment, and the real nature of his indisposition has been carefully concealed from him. No member of the family ever mentions the malevolent genius whose wicked schemes were so strangely defeated.

The kind-hearted Baronet received our hero with tears in his eyes; and ere many months had elapsed, Major St. Vincent led to the altar a bride whose smallest perfection was her singular beauty.

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Although some were found to lament that the ceremony did not take place at a fashionable metropolitan church—that the aid of a bishop was not invoked, and that the dresses of the bridesmaids and other notables were not detailed at length in the *Morning Post*—the only regret felt by the two persons most concerned was, that the Rev. William Falkland was not the clergyman who officiated on the occasion in the quiet church of St. Mary's.

Whither they proceeded after the ceremony matters as little to the reader as to a bride and bridegroom, in whose eyes Kamschatka, the Isle of Dogs, or Jericho, would have probably appeared a paradise.

We shall leave them to themselves just now, and proceed to bid farewell to the rest of our friends.

The Earl of Glenmore married the poor governess, who was not ashamed of her engagement with a "common dragoon." Miss Crump, who has betaken herself to the neighbourhood of Preston, seems deter-

mined to be an old maid, and devotes herself entirely to works of charity amongst the manufacturing population.

Bruce served with great distinction in the Crimea, and has since obtained a staff appointment at home.

He, and nearly all the officers of the Loyal Britons, who survived the Crimean campaign, have had swords presented to them by the admiring inhabitants of the respective districts in which they reside.

Rogers has been appointed physician in ordinary to the Earl of Glenmore. His social qualities, no less than his professional skill, have procured him this post. Not long ago the Earl revised some reminiscences of Balaclava, upon which Rogers retorted with the following song—

By Mars in triumph onward led,
Mid dangers that appal so—
You for your country oft have bled—
I've bled *and blistered also*.

All *jaw*, you'll say, remember then,
If I for donkey pass, sirs,
That some one killed a thousand men
With jaw-bone of an ass, sirs.

And answer which is greatest, he
Who mends or breaks your jaw-bones?
And don't turn up your nose at me,
Because I am a *saw-bones*.

Rogers has since been guilty of other lyrics, too numerous to mention.

Prettyman returned to England, viâ Moscow, and both he and Masters proceeded to India and took vengeance on the Sepoys.

Through the exertions and influence of Mrs. Broadway, the terrible catastrophes which had occurred at the Raven's Nest, were explained away, and attributed to accident. She had taken care to ensure the silence of the provincial papers in the first instance, and their good offices were subsequently secured to put the most favorable construction upon those mysterious tragedies.

The family quitted Amalfi, and proceeded to the continent with all expedition. We heard of them on the Rhine last summer, and have reason to believe that Miss (Clementina) Broadway has not yet resigned the hope of forming an aristocratic alliance, though the meshes of her net seem to permit the escape

of several eligibles—Wilmore to wit, who returning from the Crimea with “blushing honors thick upon him,” succeeded to his father’s property, and forgot the lady who had been the cause of his trip to the East.

Miss Selina, from being the mimic, has become the rival, of her ambitious sister.

Mrs. Broadway is as active as ever; and though she failed in a renewed attempt on Miss Crump in favor of the “Robber,” she has witnessed the happy fulfilment of an ancient project; her daughter Leonora has become the wife of Mr. Leger De Maine.

Since the death of Broadway and Winter, this worthy has become in some measure a reformed character. He is now a gentleman horse-dealer, and though not so great a liar as formerly, he cannot resist an occasional trespass on the demesnes of romance, relating many wonderful personal adventures during the Crimean campaign, in which he was not in any way engaged, never having been even near the scene of action.

Flint is dead, and has left a widow well off, who passes her time in saving money, and in setting her friends by the ears. It has been discovered that, acting no doubt under the advice of her mother, it was she who, at a former period, contrived to sow discord between her husband and Arthur St. Vincent.

Sir Richard De Clare long continued to hold forth on the "needlessness of the Crimean War," and has been heard to censure what he calls the "lavish distribution" of decorations and orders, and was particularly indignant at the Institution of the "Order of Valor." Nevertheless, it is to be observed, that his complaints arose, rather from an idea of injustice done to the past, than of over generosity to the present generation. Another grievance of his, but of old standing, is the Civil Order of the Bath.

"Never," said the Baronet one day to his wife, "never was distinction more grossly perverted. The idea of a Civil K.C.B. ! (I tell you, Maria, the thing is ridiculous !) Such

high honours as these, should be reserved for the objects for which they were originally intended. They are *military* rewards. The recompense of daring deeds, and noble achievements. Let the knight win his spurs, and let the fair lady buckle them on, but I'll be hanged," he added, laughing, "if they won't some day pin the Victoria Cross itself on the breasts of civilians."

"Oh! Papa!" interrupted his daughter, in a merry tone of raillery; "only conceive such a thing. Imagine a portly gentleman of the Stock Exchange receiving the decoration for 'the undermentioned act of bravery,' viz:—

'For having at such and such a date, when the funds were down at 87, gallantly and fearlessly speculated to a considerable amount to the great risk of his firm!'

"Nothing more likely," returned Sir Richard, in his usual emphatic tone and manner. "For my own part I consider that Victoria Cross the most foolish affair of the whole. In England's proudest and most

glorious days we had nothing of the kind, and yet, the acts of heroism which our men performed, have never been surpassed. Did you ever, for instance, hear of a man called Crawford, a blue-jacket in Admiral Duncan's Fleet—how, in the action off Camperdown, when the British flag was shot away from the Admiral's ship—amidst the applause of the whole fleet—ay, and of the Dutchmen too—he sprang aloft, and NAILED" (here Sir Richard, who was always energetic to vehemence in his manner of telling a story,—imitated the act described), "NAILED the colors to the mast."

We are here reminded of the fact, that, since St. Vincent—for certain services performed on the 5th. November, 1854—has received Her Majesty's permission to wear a little bronze ornament—(of shape and design much censured)—bearing this simple inscription—

"FOR VALOR"

Sir Richard De Clare has had less to say

against the decoration, and sings pæans in honor of the stubborn heroism of the Inkermann soldiers more loudly than before.

Riches as well as honors fell to the share of our hero, for shortly after his marriage he succeeded to a very large property.

His aunt did not carry out her design of retiring into a convent. On the contrary, she reverted to her former faith, and, dying soon afterwards, bequeathed her whole fortune to St. Vincent, a proportion of which he devotes to a charitable purpose—that of establishing a fund for the relief of crippled soldiers who have been discharged from the service with inadequate pensions.

The citizens of Newington, who became much less democratic at the close of the Crimean war, have asked him to represent the borough in Parliament, but we believe the invitation has not yet been accepted.

The silken thread of our narrative is nearly spun out; but while the unrelenting scissors approach, we are seized with fear lest the

displeasure of the inquisitive fair should be incurred by our neglecting to mention, with reference to Mrs. St. Vincent, that a cradle was duly procured, duly tenanted, and recently (we write in '57) contained a second little occupant.

All romantic persons will be gratified to learn that, according to the last advices from Winslow (the only reliable authority we possess), Major and Mrs. St. Vincent were "still in a hopelessly spooney state."

No bulletins have been recently issued, because our informant is unfortunately no longer in a condition to observe anything but the charming face of St. Vincent's only sister.

We are therefore obliged to conclude the story of

HEARTHES AND WATCH-FIRES.



